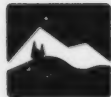


Kananaskis Country Equestrian Master Plan



Alberta
ENERGY AND
NATURAL RESOURCES
Forest Service

KANANASKIS COUNTRY
EQUESTRIAN MASTER PLAN



Kananaskis
Country



Heritage Fund

Alberta

ENERGY AND
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

The purpose of this document is to assess existing equestrian guidelines for Kananaskis Country and to propose additions or changes to them. The assessment considers existing provincial policies and guidelines, management issues, demand and other factors. Recommendations for new facilities and management actions consistent with existing provincial policies are presented.

Policy Review

A Policy for Resource Management of the Eastern Slopes (Alberta Department of Energy and Natural Resources rev. 1984), A Policy for Recreation Development of Kananaskis Country (Alberta Recreation and Parks, 1977), the draft Kananaskis Country Integrated Resource Plan (Alberta Department of Energy and Natural Resources, draft), A Commercial Trail Riding Policy for Alberta (Alberta Department of Energy and Natural Resources, Forest Service, Land Use Branch 1979), A Coal Development Policy for Alberta (Alberta Department of Energy and Natural Resources 1976) and municipal plans for Canmore and vicinity were reviewed to provide the policy framework for this planning exercise.

Plans and guidelines for Banff National Park and adjacent British Columbia lands were also assessed. Co-ordination is necessary with several existing or in-progress lands for land-use management, municipalities or other recreation developments within and outside Kananaskis Country. Several opportunities were identified for further planning co-ordination in the Canmore Corridor, Kananaskis and Spray valleys. These include the municipal plans for Improvement District 8 and the town of Canmore (Calgary Regional Planning Commission 1978), the Echo Area Structure Plan review (Inntrec Group Ltd. 1982), the broader recreation planning process underway in the Spray Valley and the final designs for the Ribbon Creek Alpine Village.

Assessment of Existing Equestrian Program

An evaluation of existing equestrian development guidelines for, planning and design was conducted and recommended changes are included in Chapter 8, Recommendations.

Definition of what constitutes appropriate equestrian activities in Kananaskis Country is presented. Its overall wildland or natural character is to be maintained, thus precluding intensive facility developments (for example, a pony stand) except at existing or proposed facility nodes.

A series of seven equestrian experience goals are presented. They are termed experience goals because it is the qualities of the recreation experience that are ultimately being sought (by users) and provided for.

Environmental and Land-Use Factors

Proposals for appropriate equestrian developments or opportunities were based initially on policy review, past, present and projected use patterns and the foregoing assessment of the existing equestrian program. These proposals were then assessed for their environmental and land-use implications. By referring to the draft Integrated Resource Plan for Kananaskis Country, it was determined that no major conflicts with or impacts on other uses existed. Next, the impact or conflict of each specific proposed facility (trail, trailhead or campground) was reviewed to determine whether the facility should be altered. Wildlife concerns, fragile soils and vegetation, public access through private lands and conflict with other recreation uses are examples of factors which modified or eliminated certain developments.

Management Considerations

The management goal of ensuring adequate resource protection and visitor use and enjoyment was proposed. Four management objectives were also stated. These were: to define the range of appropriate equestrian experiences; to define acceptable impacts or conflicts; to monitor use and impacts; and to utilize a wide range of visitor or site management techniques.

The concepts of a range of opportunities and of recreational carrying capacity are presented and applications to Kananaskis Country are recommended. Recommendations to carry out appropriate resource and use monitoring, to develop a good information program and to work closely with equestrian user groups are also presented.

Recommendations

Recommended revisions to the equestrian section of the existing Policy for Recreation Development of Kananaskis Country are presented. Diversity of trail-riding opportunities from day rides to trips of several weeks is emphasized. Opportunities for hunting access, rides over sections of historic trail and horse and buggy use are to be provided.

The Elbow-Sheep sub-region can best accommodate most of the demand from persons with their own horses and, under certain conditions, a limited number of trail-ride outfitting services. Sixty-five kilometres of additional day-ride trails are proposed for development near major trailheads or campgrounds in the Elbow-Sheep. These additional riding opportunities are required to provide a reasonable range of choices and the higher demand for shorter day rides.

Co-ordinated planning for a linking trail, day-ride trails, and public and private trailhead and overnight facilities is recommended for the Canmore sub-region. The Bow Valley South and Echo development proposals in particular, if approved, will require further

co-ordination. Similarly, equestrian developments in the Spray are recommended but are to be co-ordinated with other recreation planning both in the Spray and with that in Banff National Park. A trail linking Elbow Pass with the Spray Valley through Kananaskis Park is recommended for low-level use by those on a long-distance ride. Associated trailheads and backcountry campsites are also recommended. Horse use of Elk Pass and the Evan-Thomas Valley is to be managed at low levels on existing trails. Consideration should be given to developing a public pony stand at the Ribbon Creek Alpine Village.

The Highwood sub-region is to be managed for limited day riding, hunting access and extensive backcountry trail trips. Increased use of Fording Pass is not to be encouraged because of low management priority on the British Columbia side. Use levels generally are to be kept lower in the Highwood than in other sub-regions because of wildlife and recreation planning considerations. Roadside equestrian camping opportunities are to be provided at Etherington Creek. Backcountry camping will also occur.

Management recommendations include adopting the proposed objectives and management zones with their prescriptions for management action. More detailed monitoring of impacts and conflicts in the Highwood, Evan-Thomas and other areas is recommended. This will establish more clearly what the limits of acceptable impacts and conflicts are. Measures to obtain the necessary user information and to promote appropriate use are also recommended.

Other recommendations relate to a closure of backcountry roads, shared use of trails by riders and hikers, a review of the present no-grazing policy and the provision of commercial equestrian services.

The developments are prioritized, a preliminary cost estimate is provided and a phased approach to implementation is recommended.

Construction could be completed in the two years following approval.

Keywords: Recreation planning, backcountry recreation, equestrian planning, management.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose

The purpose of this document is to assess existing equestrian guidelines for Kananaskis Country, and to propose justifiable changes to them.

1.2 Scope

The assessment considers historical use, demand, environmental and land-use factors. New equestrian guidelines are proposed. Facility development or management actions consistent with these new guidelines are also recommended in the document. The implications and priority of the development proposals are assessed and a phased development approach is presented.

The final section of the document assesses and makes recommendations for commercial equestrian services in Kananaskis Country.

1.3 Objectives

1. To review all policies and guidelines relevant to planning, development and management of equestrian use in Kananaskis Country.

2. To establish an accurate historical perspective and to assess opportunities for including historic trails in a recommended trail system.
3. To determine quantitative and qualitative aspects of the demand for equestrian use in Kananaskis Country.
4. To define a range of appropriate equestrian opportunities for Kananaskis Country, including commercial services.
5. To ensure that proposed developments will not cause unacceptable environmental impacts or land-use conflicts.
6. To recommend more appropriate equestrian planning, development and management policies and guidelines for Kananaskis Country.
7. To recommend appropriate equestrian facility development, development phasing, standards and cost estimates.

1.4 Background

In October, 1977, the Policy for Recreation Development of Kananaskis Country was released by the minister of Alberta Recreation and Parks. This provided direction for development of a wide range of outdoor recreation facilities within Kananaskis Country. The policy stated that equestrian opportunities were to be provided for in the Elbow-Sheep sub-region. Horse use would not be permitted in the Kananaskis-Spray sub-region.

A consultant was engaged to prepare a master plan. This was completed in March, 1979, and has guided trail, campground and trailhead construction since that time.

In 1979, the Kananaskis Country Citizens' Advisory Committee recommended to the minister that the existing equestrian policy be reviewed to determine whether it should be made less restrictive. In particular, the provision for longer-distance rides (to connect the Elbow-Sheep with the Canmore Corridor or Banff National Park, for example), rides over traditional routes (Elk Pass, for example) and adequate facilities for horses in the Highwood sub-region were to be considered.

In 1979, the Kananaskis Country Cabinet Committee approved limited use of horses in the Kananaskis-Spray sub-region (including the Highwood but not Kananaskis Provincial Park). Also, a one-year moratorium was declared to examine equestrian-use needs. This moratorium initiated the present review process.

In 1980, the Cabinet Committee approved an equestrian policy change which spelled out more specific restrictions on horse use within Kananaskis Park.

The above equestrian policies and guidelines are to be reviewed, refined and expanded in this review process.

1.5 Plan Area

The boundaries of the plan are outlined on Map 1. Several areas outside Kananaskis Country boundary (for example, Bragg Creek, Banff National Park, Elk Lakes Provincial Park) are considered in the plan as they have existing or potential equestrian facilities or activities which should be co-ordinated with developments inside Kananaskis Country.

2. REVIEW OF POLICIES AND GUIDELINES

All policies, plans and guidelines pertaining to equestrian development within Kananaskis Country were reviewed. These apply both to Kananaskis Country and adjoining lands. The relevant portions are presented below with all sources of policies or guidelines referenced and included in the bibliography.

2.1 Policies

2.1.1 A Policy for Resource Management of the Eastern Slopes

A broad framework for multiple-use land management in the Eastern Slopes of the province was announced in July, 1977. This policy includes a land-use zoning system established as a means of "maximizing the benefits derived from the region while minimizing the resource conflicts and costs incurred" (Alberta Department of Energy and Natural Resources 1977:3). General priorities and guidelines for zoning are outlined in the publication. Those pertaining in a general way to equestrian facility development and use are:

- Watershed management is given the highest priority.
- Recreational potential and esthetic quality of the mountains and foothills will be maintained.

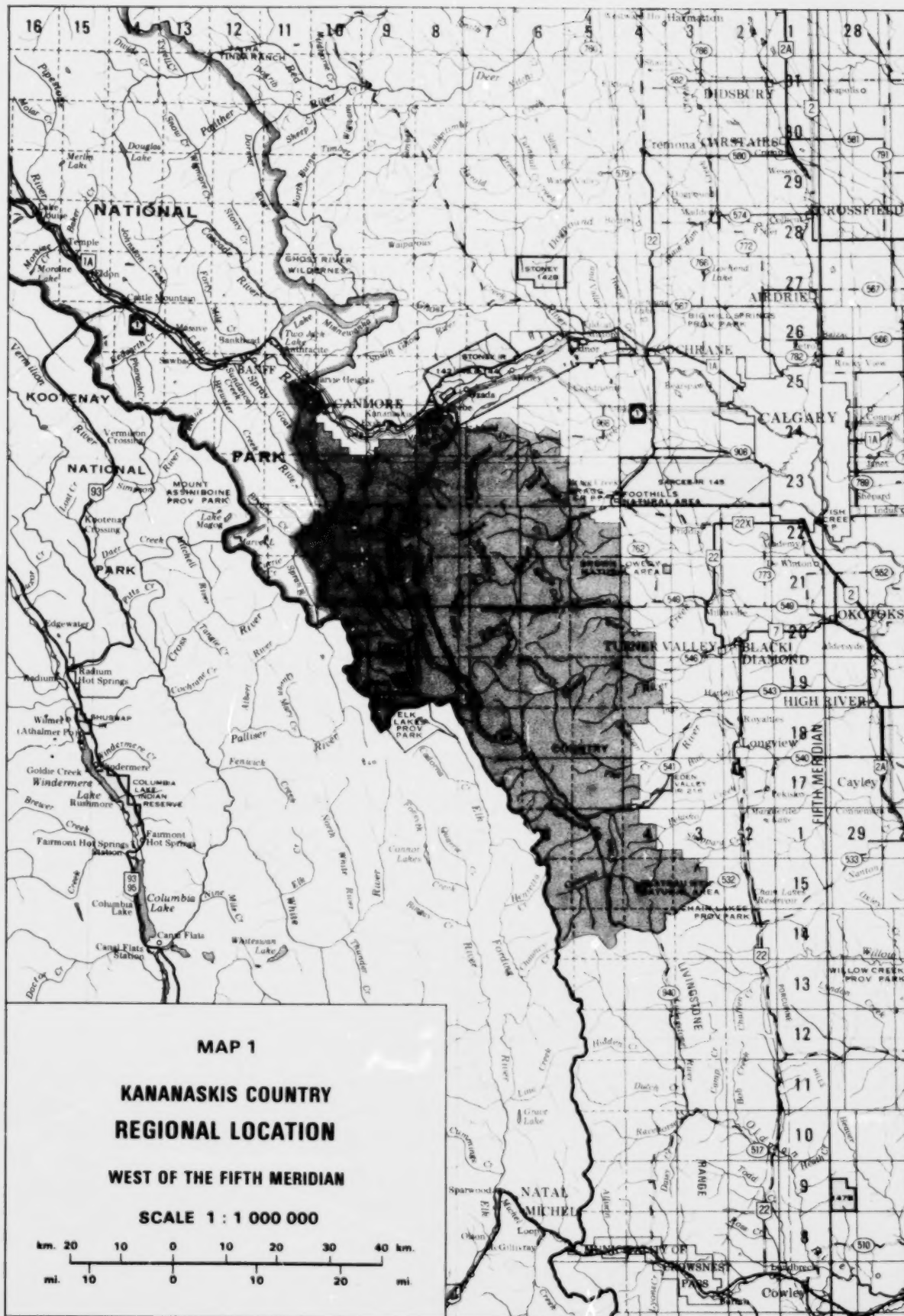
-- Critical wildlife habitat and areas of natural significance will be protected.

The Eastern Slopes have been divided into many sub-regions. Each sub-region was to have a detailed integrated resource plan (IRP) produced in order of priority.

The Kananaskis Country IRP is at the draft stage. Contact with the planning team was made during initial agency consultations. An initial resource assessment was obtained from the Preliminary Biophysical Capability Analysis (McGregor 1981) produced for the IRP. As well, contacts with related planning agencies were aided by the IRP team.

There is a need to co-ordinate equestrian planning with the Kananaskis Country IRP. A review of Integrated Resource Plan: Kananaskis Country Sub-Regional Plan (Alberta Department of Energy and Natural Resources. Resource Evaluation and Planning Division 1984), revealed no overall prohibitions to limited equestrian developments throughout the plan area. Several specific restrictions on facility locations and/or intensity of use are listed in the publication. Examples include critical fisheries, critical wildlife area and sensitive terrain. These are referred to later in this plan in Section 6.2 Assessment of Proposed Equestrian Developments.

The southern portion of the Ghost River Integrated Resource Plan area is near the northern boundary of this Equestrian Master Plan area. While the Ghost River IRP is in the resource management policy stage, a background report, Forest Recreation Resource Evaluation of the Ghost



River Study Area (Alberta Forest Service, Recreation Section 1978) was reviewed. Discussions occurred with the Ghost River planning team and knowledgeable forest personnel. Several observations and guidelines relating to equestrian facilities or activities in the Ghost area were noted. Trail riding and hiking were judged as the most appropriate activities in the Ghost and South Ghost valleys. Limited trail connections with Kananaskis Country are foreseen. Trailhead locations were suggested for the Ghost Valley. Four Class I Commercial Outfitter Permits were recently issued for the Ghost District.

The northern portion of the Livingstone-Porcupine Hills Integrated Resource Plan area is adjacent to the southern end of this Equestrian Master Plan area. Preliminary recreation proposals include the construction of equestrian staging areas, linking trails and designated backcountry camping sites. A Class I Commercial Trail Riding Area has been approved for the Livingstone area.

The equestrian activities in the region around Kananaskis Country are considered in the evaluation of a regional trail system in assessing demand for similar activities in Kananaskis Country.

2.1.2 Kananaskis Country Recreation Development Policy

The Policy for Recreation Development of Kananaskis Country, released in October, 1977, by the minister of Alberta Recreation and Parks, was seen as a conceptual policy to direct orderly recreation development within Kananaskis Country. A wide range of recreation opportunities was to be provided while conflicts with other land uses

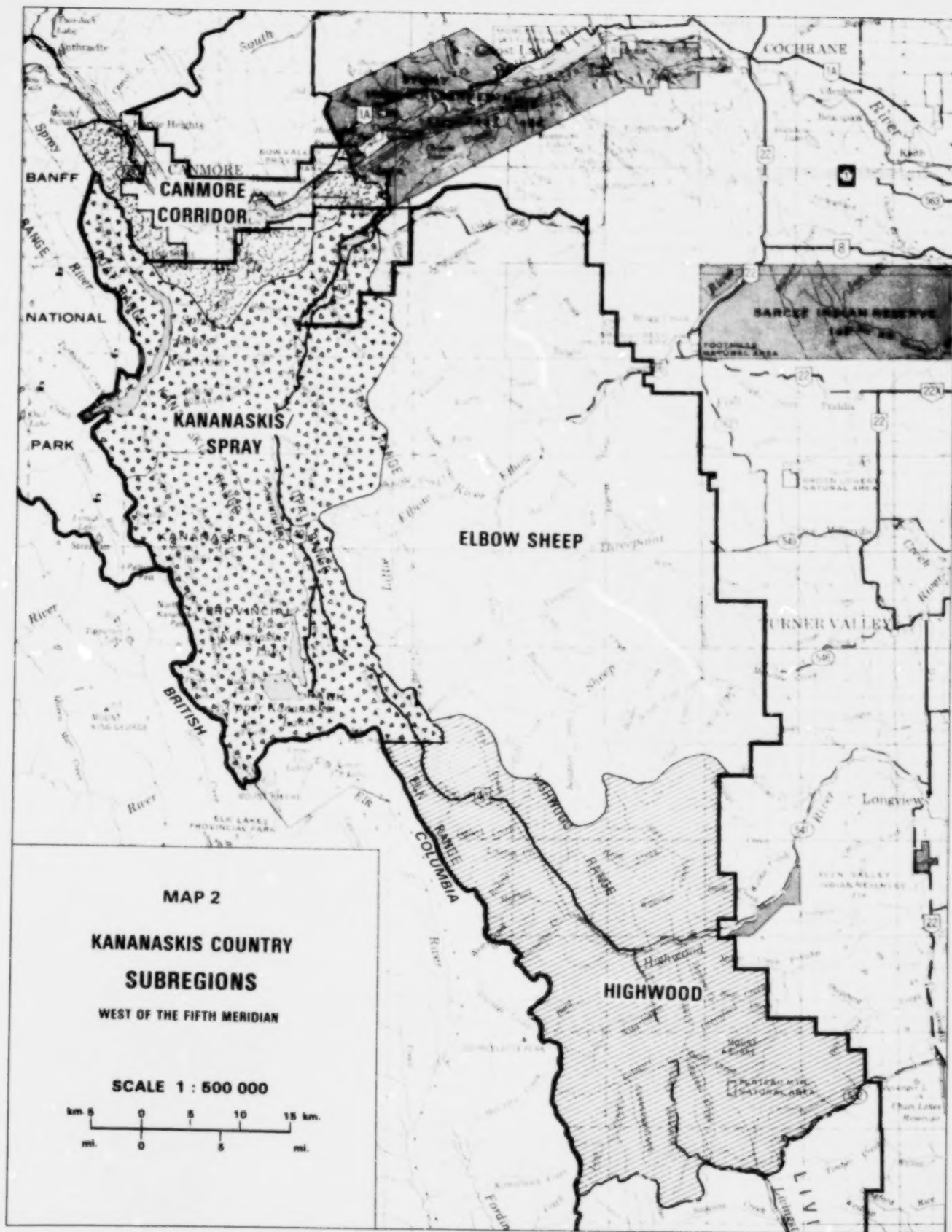
and between recreationists was to be minimized. The long term protection of the recreation resources was to be ensured.

It is important to note that the Kananaskis Country Recreation Development Policy gives fish and wildlife considerations a high priority throughout. Several areas of particular concern have been identified (shown later in Map 6). Equestrian and other trail development within or near critical parts of these Zone 2 areas and, in some cases, parts of other zones too, will be restricted. All development proposals will be subject to review by the Fish and Wildlife Division as well as representatives of other agencies.

The 1977 policy directed the following for equestrian developments:

Horse trails will be developed throughout the Elbow/Sheep sub-region with shorter circuits associated with the dude ranches in the Canmore sub-region. Horse use will not be permitted in the Kananaskis-Spray sub-region due to sensitive terrain and wildlife considerations. The higher tolerance of the vegetation and low mountain passes make the Elbow/Sheep sub-region one of the best locations for trail riding in a mountain setting in Alberta. An extensive trail system including staging areas, loading ramps, backcountry campsites and corrals will be developed to make this excellent resource readily available to the people of Alberta. Ford Creek and Bluerock will be developed as the main staging areas and numerous loop circuits will be located in the backcountry to the west. Permits will be issued for the use of the gated Elbow/Sheep service road to allow feed and supplies to be transported to designated campsites. This will allow groups the opportunity of extended stays in a backcountry setting without the necessity of packhorses. Grazing of horses will not be permitted to reduce environmental damage and competition with wildlife.

Day-use trail riding opportunities will be developed in the Sibbald Flats-Jumpingpound Creek area. Considerations will be given to a commercial trail riding operation in this vicinity. (Alberta Recreation and Parks 1977:22).



With the above policies directing equestrian planning to the Elbow/Sheep sub-region (see Map 2), the consulting firm Lombard North was engaged to produce a master plan. This was approved in March, 1979, to direct initial trails and staging area construction within the Elbow/Sheep.

Revisions to the 1977 recreation development policy were approved by Cabinet committee in June, 1979. This saw the statement "horse use will not be permitted in the Kananaskis-Spray sub-region", changed to "horse use will be limited". Also, the following statement was added:

Traditional trail rides will be permitted during the summer of 1979 and 1980, during which time equestrian use needs in the area will be studied by the Kananaskis Country Citizens Advisory Committee and the Government. Horse use will not be permitted in Kananaskis Provincial Park.

In July, 1980, the Kananaskis Country Cabinet Committee approved a further equestrian policy change. The new policy statements were:

Horse use will be restricted to designated trails and facilities at specific times within Kananaskis Provincial park and all effort will be made to minimize conflict between horses and other users. Establishment of horse rental concessions will not be considered within Kananaskis Provincial Park. Sensitive terrain and wildlife consideration may make it necessary to restrict the frequency and numbers of equestrians in high elevation areas. (Alberta Recreation and Parks.) (Source: memo July 19, 1980 from Kananaskis Country Planning Director.)

It should be emphasized here that the above excerpts from the Kananaskis Country Recreation Development Policy are the key statements to be reviewed and restated in Chapter 8, Recommendations.

The 1977 policy restricted equestrian use to the Elbow/Sheep. The statements became somewhat less restrictive with the two policy amendments. The amendments suggest that "limited use" be defined and

that the types, location, timing and frequency of equestrian use be determined for all of Kananaskis Country including Kananaskis Provincial Park. This is supported further in the development policy where it is stated that "the trail system will be developed to facilitate hiking from end to end of Kananaskis Country both from north to south and east to west. Development of a Great Divide Trail is endorsed" (Recreation Development Policy for Kananaskis Country rev. 1979. p. 22). While this statement refers to hiking opportunities, it is assumed here that most of this interconnected regional trail system would be suitable for equestrian use on a shared basis. Equestrian use is traditional and on-going, particularly in the Elbow/Sheep and Highwood regions. Shared use would increase the utility of trail facilities. Potential impacts and conflicts will have to be considered before particular shared-use trails are recommended. The more rugged terrain, the fragile alpine soils and vegetation, and the high levels of hiker use in the Kananaskis-Spray sub-region will tend to restrict equestrian use to a few designated trails or routes. These links would be primarily for those on long-distance trips wishing to travel from the Elbow-Sheep through the Kananaskis-Spray to Banff National Park or the reverse.

On page 15 of the Recreation Development Policy (rev. 1979), the restrictions on development in the Highwood Valley are stated. While the valley possesses high scenic values and good highway access, it also contains the largest and most important elk range in the Calgary area. Previous interference on this range by recreationists had resulted in under-utilization. Conflict with snowmobiling, all-terrain vehicle use and campground activities was to be eliminated and habitat improvement

programs initiated. Day-use site development was to be restricted to picnicking or other activities that would occur close to the highway instead of the backcountry. Summer-only trails may be located in this area only after a careful evaluation of wildlife values.

These policy statements provide the most direct policy guidance to this planning process. There is no evidence at this time that the policy statements above are too permissive concerning equestrian use in Kananaskis Country.

2.1.3 Kananaskis and Bow Valley Provincial Parks Management Plans

Currently, no formal management plans exist for the Kananaskis and Bow Valley provincial parks within Kananaskis Country. Several interim guidelines have been developed for Kananaskis Park which limit horse use to specified trailheads and require trail use in the park to have special authorization. There is a desire by managers to minimize conflict with other park users and impact on sensitive terrain (R. Woods, verbal comm. Superintendent, Kananaskis Provincial Park). Bow Valley Park has no backcountry trails and no public horse use. Horse patrols have been used by rangers for several summers. The recently approved Bow Valley South Master Plan calls for the development of equestrian camping, trailhead and trail facilities. Portions of trails would be shared by commercial users based at Rafter 6 Guest Ranch and the Yamnuska Centre.

2.2 Other Related Policies/Plans/Guidelines

2.2.1 Commercial Trail Riding Policy

The Commercial Trail Riding Policy was approved by Energy and Natural Resources in 1979. Applicable to the Green Area, it is intended to "protect recreational resources, the environment and to ensure a consistent standard of quality service across the province. In these ways it is ultimately designed to protect the interests of sincere commercial trail operators." (Source, A Commercial Trail Riding Policy for Alberta, brochure). Suitable lands in the Green Area are designated as Class I, II or III areas requiring an operator to obtain leases or permits for camps and trail use (see Appendix). No leases or permits have been approved for Kananaskis Country. Four permit areas have recently been approved for the Ghost District and one in the Livingstone Valley, south of Kananaskis Country. These will be considered in assessments of the need for and the type and location of any commercial equestrian services inside Kananaskis Country.

A main objective of this document is to recommend ways in which the Commercial Trail Riding Policy might be applied in Kananaskis Country. This is addressed in Chapter 9 of this document.

2.2.2 Backcountry Management Policies/Guidelines

There are no Backcountry Management policies or guidelines for Kananaskis Country. There are, however, several pertinent policies restricting such things as off-road vehicle use, random camping, fires

and littering. Except for the restriction of off-road vehicle use, these do not present significant equestrian planning guidelines or constraint at this time. The Alberta Forest Service, Alberta Recreation and Parks and the Fish and Wildlife Division have major responsibility for monitoring a range of resource conditions in Kananaskis Country. These include impacts on vegetation, soils, water and wildlife. When potential or actual impacts are recognized, an interagency management decision is made to treat the problem effectively. Equestrian management recommendations are presented in Chapter 8. At present, standards for backcountry facility operation are contained in "Maintenance and Operating Standards for Kananaskis Country", Alberta Recreation and Parks 1982. A more comprehensive equestrian management plan is required for Kananaskis Country in the near future.

2.2.3 Alberta Coal Development Policy

A Coal Development Policy for Alberta (Alberta Department of Energy and Natural Resources 1976), classified all lands in the Eastern Slopes in terms of the extent to which coal exploration and development activities would be permitted. This policy, subject to periodic review, indicates that most of Kananaskis Country is in Category 1 lands where all coal activity is excluded. This presents no constraint to equestrian planning. Limited coal development on Category 2 lands in the future is a possibility (W. Kammermayer, E.N.R., verb. comm.). Conflict between this development and most equestrian trail activity would probably be minimal except possibly in the Upper Sheep Valley.

Here Burns Resources holds all of the feasible trail route. Burns is preparing a proposal regarding these lands to be submitted to the Government of Alberta. Consideration of the proposal should include provision for public access as well as minimizing conflicts with any proposed coal exploration or development.

Category 4 lands for active coal extraction have covered patented lands in the Canmore Corridor. These patented lands have recently changed hands and a wide range of developments are being explored. The implications are discussed further in section 2.2.4.

2.2.4 General Municipal Plan - Town of Canmore and I.D. No. 8

A general municipal plan was approved in 1978 for Canmore and Improvement District No. 8 (Calgary Regional Planning Commission). Background studies inventoried historic trails and routes as well as existing commercial equestrian operations. A small recreational and educational equestrian centre was recently built east of the town. There is one grazing lease near Canmore for the local Bow Valley Riding Club. There are no designated public equestrian trails in the Canmore Corridor or in adjoining Improvement District (I.D.) No. 8 lands.

The approved general municipal plan recognizes the likelihood of increasing demand for equestrian facilities in the plan area. It contains recommendations to concentrate equestrian feeding areas as well as to cluster new trailhead facilities in the areas such as Canmore, Pigeon Mountain and Chilver Lake. Hiking and equestrian trails are recommended for development to parallel the Bow River and to link the

2.2.5 Municipal Districts No. 31 and 44

Development officers of Municipal Districts No. 31 and 44 report that the Elkana Ranch in the Bragg Creek area is the only commercial equestrian facility to have received a development permit. The ranch makes occasional use of trails in Kananaskis Country, mainly in the Elbow Valley and tributaries.

Both municipal districts operate under the provisions of the Calgary Regional Plan (Calgary Regional Planning Commission 1980) which sets broad planning guidelines and policies for development. Development of guest ranch or similar operations is encouraged where the physical features are suitable, where they are compatible with neighboring development and where the land is not suitable for farming (p. 35). It is possible that guest ranches or outfitters may operate from a fixed base within these municipal districts or Improvement District No. 8 and utilize trails and campsites in Kananaskis Country. Planning and management implications of this commercial use are dealt with in Chapter 9 of this document.

There are no designated public trails on or connecting municipal district lands with Kananaskis Country. To date, formal trail development has been regarded as unfeasible for the municipal districts to undertake. With continued subdivision of lands, particularly in the Bragg Creek vicinity, trail development may become more feasible as corridors are defined and demand increases. For the present, this equestrian plan should review the existing demand for riding opportunities west of Bragg Creek and recognize the future possibility of linking

surrounding region. The priority for equestrian trail development, however, is not high at this time.

Several issues affecting this plan are under review. One which may have a major influence on equestrian and other trails system planning is the Echo development proposal for large year-round recreational-residential development between Wind Creek and Canmore in the Bow and West Wind valleys. Hotels, residences and recreational homes are proposed. These would be grouped in four nodes along a parkway type of road paralleling the Trans-Canada Highway. A golf course, small reservoirs and an extensive system of trails for hiking, bicycling, riding and cross-country skiing are included. One of the four residential-recreational communities (Echo Greens) may be developed especially for those people interested in owning or renting horses and associated services. An equestrian activity centre would have horse-holding, training, rental and supply facilities.

An area structure plan for Echo was submitted to Improvement District No. 8 by the developers in 1982. The review of the plan by I.D. No. 8 and Calgary Regional Planning Commission is underway. If approved, construction of Phase I of the proposal may commence in 1984.

If no development occurs, only trails linking the Canmore Corridor with the Kananaskis and Spray valleys will be required. A trailhead near Pigeon Mountain will probably be included in this scheme. If the Echo development proceeds, additional day-ride trails and co-operative management arrangements will be required. Development of these will be based on public versus private demand and access to the trails. A cost sharing of development and operations may be required.

trails east of the forest reserve, but not propose immediate development of these unless they can be shown to be desirable for present Kananaskis Country purposes.

2.2.6 Indian Reserves

The Morley Indian Reserve joins the east end of the Canmore Corridor and borders part of Kananaskis Country. No commercial equestrian operations are known to utilize Kananaskis country. Small recreational horse parties likely leave the south end of the reserve and use existing trails in the Kananaskis-Jumpingpound area. The Stoney Wilderness Centre in the northwest portion of the reserve operates north into the Ghost District (I. Getty, Consultant, Morley Band, verb. comm.).

There are no trail-riding activities or facilities planned for the Sarcee Reserve (near Bragg Creek) which will affect Kananaskis Country.

Limited horse and tack rentals are provided by band members of the Eden Valley Reserve in the Highwood Valley mainly during hunting season (J. Burritt, AFS Calgary, verb. comm.). This is dealt with further in Chapter 9, Commercial Equestrian Services.

2.2.7 British Columbia Contacts

The British Columbia Forest Service and British Columbia Provincial Parks were contacted on their policies and plans for lands

adjoining Kananaskis Country. Lands to the west of Highwood (in the upper Elk and Fording river valleys) may see expanded coal mining activity in the near future. Elk Lakes Provincial Park, adjacent to Kananaskis Provincial Park, may be expanded and/or upgraded for back-country hiking and camping in the future. In view of pending significant land-use changes or restrictions on horse use in these adjoining B.C. lands, trail use over Fording, Elk or other passes should not be significantly increased on the Alberta side. On-going liaison with British Columbia agencies should occur to ensure co-ordinated planning and development.

2.2.8 Banff National Park

The Banff National Park planner provided several equestrian planning or management guidelines early in this plan process. More recently, equestrian use has been under review in the Four Mountain Park Planning Program (Parks Canada 1982).

Banff National Park lands adjoining Kananaskis country are managed for backcountry recreation under the terms of a Management Plan Spray Divide Unit (Parks Canada 1981). This recognizes the existing high-use levels along several trails in the unit. A visitor activity zoning scheme is applied which defines permitted kinds, levels and conditions of hiking or horse use. Some additional use on selected trails by small private horse parties may be acceptable to Parks Canada, which also expressed interest in relocating the main Spray trailhead to the south side of the reservoir because of unsatisfactory public access on the north side.

The review of equestrian use as part of the Four Mountain Park Planning Program has identified several issues and management problems. They will be considered in evaluating and recommending developments or use in Kananaskis Country.

These issues or problems include grazing management, difficulties for riders in obtaining permits or information, the inadequate number of campsites and trails, unclear recreational objectives, too few large backcountry group camps, absence of formal agreement for operation of large backcountry group camps, helicopter use, impacts on soils, vegetation, water and other backcountry users.

2.3 Summary of Policy and Related Guidelines for Equestrian Planning

The main points made in the foregoing chapter are the need to:

1. Observe Eastern Slopes zoning priorities and guidelines.
2. Ensure equestrian planning is co-ordinated with management, land-use, municipal and development plans and guidelines for Kananaskis country and adjoining lands.
3. Review and assess the adequacy of existing Equestrian Master Plan recommendations for the Elbow-Sheep sub-region.
4. Examine the feasibility/desirability of a variety of equestrian developments throughout Kananaskis Country, and make recommendations.

5. Address the establishment of commercial trail-riding areas within Kananaskis Country.
6. Make recommendations on management of backcountry equestrian use.

3. HISTORIC ROUTES AND TRAILS

"Similar to the canoe in eastern and northern Canada, the horse has been the time-honoured means of exploration and access in the mountains, foothills, and prairies of western Canada." (Kananaskis Country Equestrian Trail Master Plan, Draft, Lombard North 1979:13).

The use of horses in the Kananaskis region is a well-established tradition. Past horse use provides an accurate historical context for present-day uses, suggesting what styles of use are traditional. As well, historic trail routes which have potential recreation, historic or interpretive value will be identified. These will be considered in Chapter 5 in the overall assessment of the recreational value or priority of proposed trails.

From a review of historical references, the following periods of historical use are proposed to aid the overview:

1. Historic and Prehistoric Native Use (pre-1840)
2. Early Explorers, Surveyors, Loggers (1840 - 1900)
3. Early Grazing and Outfitting (1900 - 1930)
4. Forest Rangers (1930 - 1955)

3.1 Historic and Prehistoric Native Use (Pre-1840)

Native use of the plan area probably extends back more than 10 000 years. Evidence of use and occupation is mainly from preliminary archeological surveys and a few more intensive excavations in the way of

or adjacent to major facility developments. Few details of the origins and fate of various native peoples through the centuries exist. The Stoneys were apparently well established in the foothills and Rockies by the 1840s. Theirs was a migratory hunting-gathering-trading way of life with repeated use of favorable wintering grounds. These included the Bow and Highwood river valleys. Spring, summer and fall saw the bands disperse and utilize summer game range. Trading trips by various foothills and prairie tribes occurred particularly over mountain passes to lands occupied by the Kootenay Indians.

While early movements were on foot with pack dogs, horses became common after 1700. This pattern of life resulted in numerous trails linking wintering, summering and trading centres. The major trails were likely in the Bow, Kananaskis and Highwood areas as these were apparently the areas of most concentrated use (Map 3). Very few remnants of these trails exist today. The Morley Trail is reputed to have been a major trail linking Morley (on the Bow) with the Highwood River Valley. Its location has been established with some certainty in several foothill locales both inside and outside Kananaskis Country. The Jumping-pound, Elbow and Sheep valleys and most of their tributaries would have seen light to moderate seasonal traffic depending on many environmental and cultural factors. Remnants of hunting camps have been found in all the major valleys and a few at higher elevations.

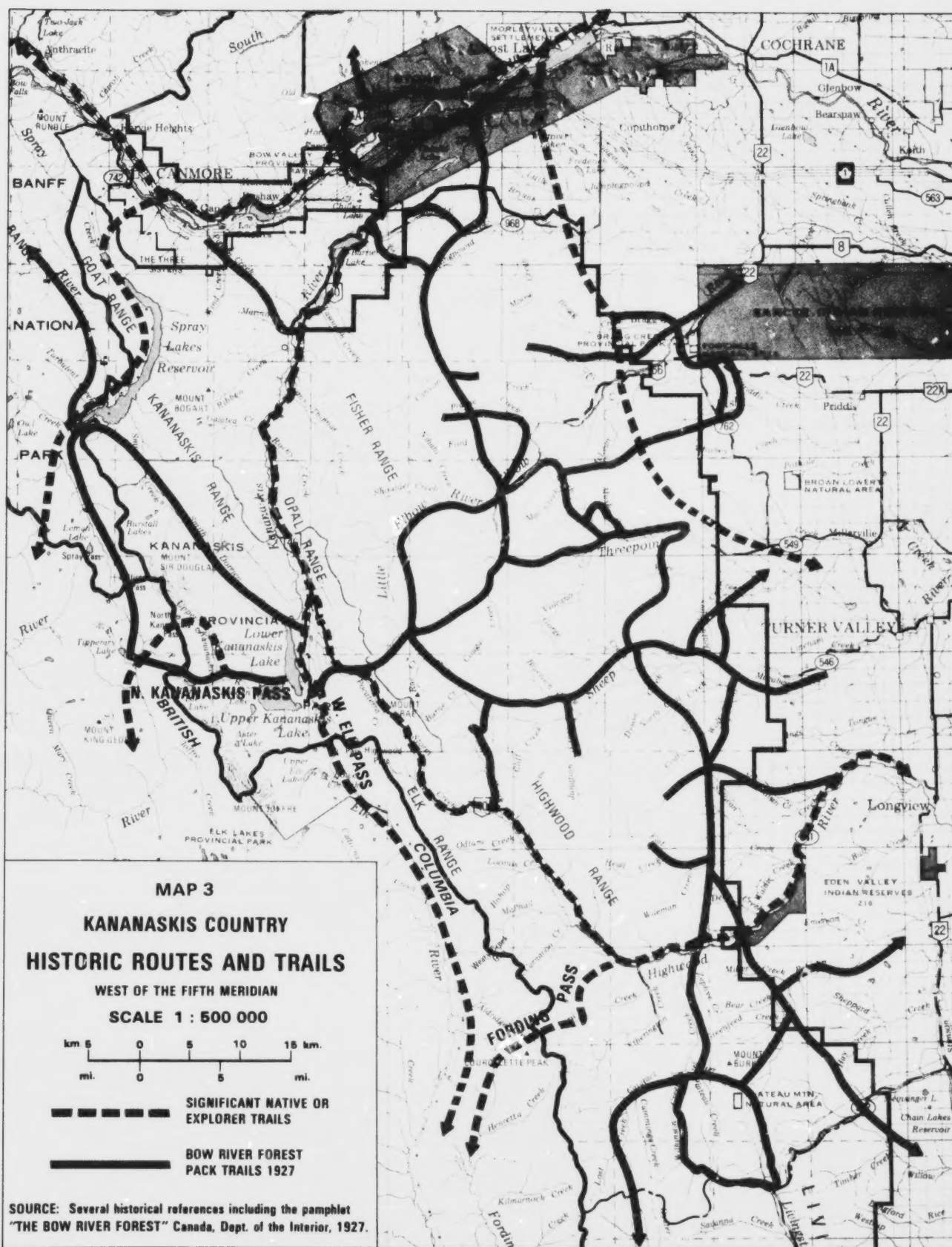
Evidence suggests that the main trading travel routes across the Great Divide (in the plan area) were Fording, Elk and Kananaskis passes (Map 3) while other ones like Weary Gap (in the Elk Range) appear to have received less use. Traverses of alpine areas (for example, Elbow-Sheep headwaters) within Kananaskis Country must also have occurred.

In summary, most valleys and passes in Kananaskis Country appear to have seen native use with trail and hunting camp development. These likely followed game trails or lines of least resistance. The Bow, Kananaskis and Highwood valleys appear to have been most heavily used. Physical remnants of these early trails are few and mostly obscure because of vegetative changes, less use and subsequent road or other developments. Nevertheless, the major routes have been mapped (Map 3) and are considered in Chapter 5 of this plan.

3.2 Early Explorers, Surveyors, Loggers (1840 - 1900)

Available records show that early explorers using horses and native guides travelled the Bow, Kananaskis and Spray valleys. James Sinclair led two separate parties of settlers over the Whiteman and Elk or Kananaskis passes in 1841 and 1850 respectively. Members of the Palliser Expedition of 1858 explored the Kananaskis Valley as an alternative railroad route. Dr. G. M. Dawson of the Geological Survey and A. O. Wheeler of the Boundary Survey did early surveying, mapping and naming. During this same era, many miners began utilizing the Kananaskis Valley as a transportation corridor to the gold-rich areas of British Columbia.

The earliest logging began in 1880s. Timber berths in the upper Sheep, Highwood, Kananaskis, Spray and Elbow valleys were among these earliest operations. Horses were used for skidding logs, hauling sleighs and wagons as well as being used as pack animals. The earliest coal mining activity in the foothills and mountains also relied on horses for motive power.



The network of logging trails and roads in the Highwood and, to a lesser extent, in the Smith Dorrien Valley offer trail routes of varying potential. Elsewhere, old trails have less potential for actual use though their use-history may add to their interpretive value.

3.3 Early Grazing and Outfitting (1900-1930)

Long before roads were built in the area, horses were used extensively by ranchers and hunting outfitters. Several books such as Buffalo Head (Patterson 1961) and John Ware's Cow Country (McEwan 1960) portray the pattern and flavor of early ranching along the foothills. Summer range extended, in some cases, higher up into the mountains than it does today. Established trails in main valleys were likely used by cattle as were some new ones created by the interest in accessing good grazing areas in tributaries. Many of the names for creeks and other local features in the foothills and eastern mountains originated during this period. The cowboy tradition in the plan area thus goes back to the turn of the century. Certainly this tradition contributes significantly to the interest and character of recreation riding here today.

Most of the guides and outfitters were based in Banff but made some trips south to the Kananaskis. Trails up the Highwood, Upper Sheep and Elbow valleys were utilized or established during recreational trips by ranchers or others along the foothills. It is not known how intensive this use was but it has a long history in the region. A federal government brochure on the Bow River Forest in 1927 states "the number of people in this country who go into the forest on picnic,

camping, fishing or hunting trips is increasing from year to year by leaps and bounds" (The Bow River National Forest, Alberta, Department of the Interior, Forest Service 1927). The book Diamond Hitch (Hart 1979) documents outfitting history mainly in the national parks. The methods and style of travel were likely quite similar throughout the region. The history of local outfitting remains to be recorded.

3.4 Forest Rangers (1930-1955)

In 1930, the Province of Alberta inherited management responsibility for the former Dominion forest reserve in the province. The pack trails shown on Map 2 indicate the extensive nature of ranger horse travel for fire, timber, grazing and other patrols or inspections.

The map is drawn from a 1927 map prepared by the Dominion government for a brochure which explained the multiple uses of the Bow River Forest. The brochure extolled the miles of improved roads for automobiles, the hunting, fishing and camping opportunities. It mentioned 450 miles of "primary" trails and "an even larger mileage of secondary and auxiliary trails. The primary trails are kept in good condition and can be used on pack-train trips to the more inaccessible corners of the forest."

The construction and maintenance of roads, trails and telephone lines was a major part of the job for the federal and, after 1930, the provincial forest ranger. This work continued along telephone lines until 1955 when the telephone was replaced by radio. Since then the telephone "treeline" and other sections of trail have been overgrown or largely forgotten. Old trails were replaced by roads from 1920 on.

Sections of these old designated trails are still available and suitable for recreational riding. Many trails in main valleys, however, were obscured by road construction. Often only short sections of these main valley trails can be utilized today, and often the presence of a busy highway in the valley eliminates the need for a trail link and reduces the quality of the riding experience. Old ranger trails in as yet roadless areas are often well suited as parts of a recreational trail system. Several roads which obscure old trails have been put off-limits to motorized vehicle travel in Kananaskis Country. Sections of these (for example, the Elbow-Sheep summit road) might be reclaimed, becoming more suitable components of the trail system. More recent seismic lines are of limited value as recreation trails, though short sections of line access trails may occasionally be suitable.

3.5 Summary and Evaluation

Evidence of historic routes and trails is mostly circumstantial before the early 1900s. Archeological excavations and early written or oral reports indicate a long history of use and/or occupation of the plan area by many native tribes. Horse use began after 1700. This probably extended the range and frequency of travel for hunting, raiding or trading purposes.

The long tradition of horses for ranching, recreation, forest use and management contributes significantly to the pattern of today's recreational horse use. It also resulted in an extensive network of trails, some of which are suitable as recreation trails or routes today.

The historic routes and trails are marked on Map 3. Based on present knowledge, those with the greatest historical value are likely those in the Bow, Kananaskis, Spray and Highwood valleys. Most of these are obscured by road development. Of the known historic trails, those with the most recreational riding value today would include sections in the Spray and Kananaskis valleys, Elk Pass, Highwood Valley tributaries (especially Fording Pass) or sections of pack trail in the Elbow-Sheep sub-region.

Since only fragments of actual old trail treads remain, current trails often parallel the old and require interpretive information. The relative historic value of proposed trails is considered in Chapter 6. There are no trails in Kananaskis Country known to have provincial or national historic significance.

4. DEMAND

This chapter consists of two sections. The first describes the pattern of recent equestrian use within or near Kananaskis Country while the second presents available use projections and planning implications for the same area.

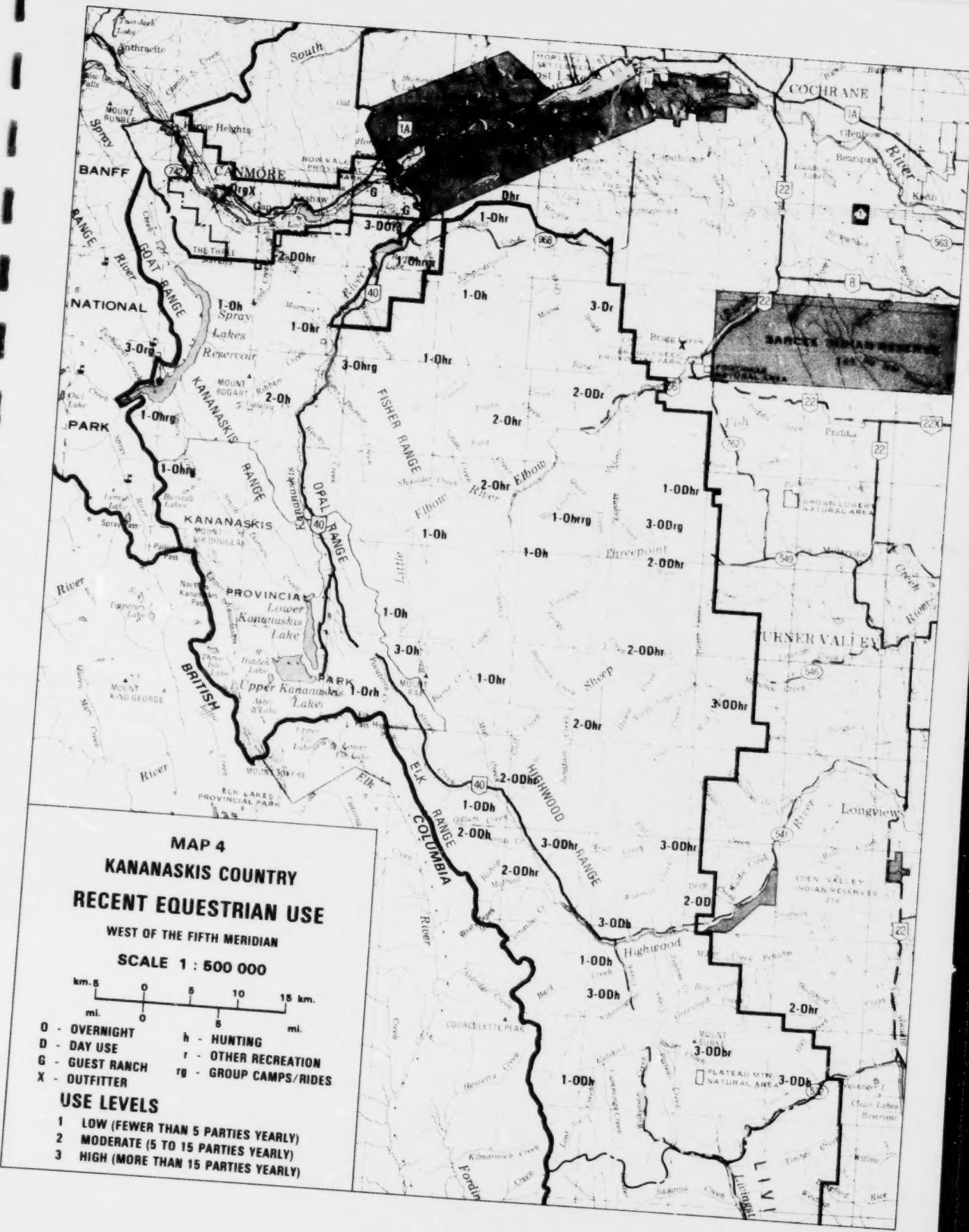
The description of recent equestrian use is based on observations and records from forestry district officers and other knowledgeable sources. These provide the best available estimates of average use. The locations, types and levels of uses are presented on Map 4. Observations and an assessment of the planning implications follow.

4.1 Recent Equestrian Use

The following observations are based on information illustrated on Map 4. The kinds of current equestrian uses within Kananaskis Country are categorized as commercial/non-commercial, group/non-group, day-use/overnight, hunting/other prime motivations. It should be noted that this "other" category includes a wide range of riding motivations as well as horse and buggy clubs, and hikers with pack animals.

4.1.1 Use Levels and Locales

There are several trails or trailheads in the plan area used traditionally by more than 15 parties a year. These are the upper Spray



MAP 4
KANANASKIS COUNTRY
RECENT EQUESTRIAN USE
WEST OF THE FIFTH MERIDIAN

SCALE 1 : 500 000
km. 5 0 5 10 15 km.
mi. 0 5 10 mi.

- | | |
|-----------------|------------------------|
| O - OVERNIGHT | h - HUNTING |
| D - DAY USE | r - OTHER RECREATION |
| G - GUEST RANCH | rg - GROUP CAMPS/RIDES |
| X - OUTFITTER | |

USE LEVELS

- 1 LOW (FEWER THAN 5 PARTIES YEARLY)
- 2 MODERATE (5 TO 15 PARTIES YEARLY)
- 3 HIGH (MORE THAN 15 PARTIES YEARLY)

Reservoir (outfitter base for Banff National Park), Canmore (hourly rides), Rafter 6 Ranch, Yamnuska Centre, Evan-Thomas Valley (mainly hunting), and West Bragg Creek (mainly local residents on day rides). Several Highwood Valley locales have seen significant increases in horse use in 1982, especially during hunting season. As well, the recently established equestrian campgrounds at North Fork and Sandy McNabb attracted approximately 1200 equestrian camper nights in 1981. Use data for 1983 shows over 8000 equestrian camper nights at Sandy McNabb, Blue-rock and North Fork.

Little organized equestrian group camping occurs outside of North Fork Group Camp. Approximately eight to 15 groups which result in 500 to 1000 horse-days annually have camped here each of the last few years. Group camping, riding and buggy tripping do occur on private land nearby. A desire for more primitive, vehicle-access group campsites has been expressed by several local groups (B. Beck, Alberta Equestrian Federation, verb. comm. February 1984). No large groups such as Trailriders of the Canadian Rockies currently utilize backcountry areas in Kananaskis Country. Since similar groups may want to use Kananaskis Country, they are considered in the assessment in Chapter 9. One other area of high equestrian use is near Willow Creek. Individuals and groups such as the Spitzee Carriage and Cutter Club have made repeated use of this area in the south end of Kananaskis Country. This area is used for a variety of equestrian and other recreational activities but has not been redeveloped to Kananaskis Country standards.

Lower levels of horse use have occurred in several places in the Spray and Smith Dorrien valleys. Sheep hunters have occasionally used horses along the east side of Spray Reservoir. Large group rides in

Banff National Park have used the west end of the Spray Reservoir as a trailhead. Hunters, and occasionally recreational riders, have used the Pigeon Mountain, Ribbon and Galatea Creeks areas.

Kananaskis Lakes was a popular destination for horse parties before the hydro-electric developments. Following public road access, the area became more of a trailhead or stopover for those on longer recreational horse trips. The area contains several traditional equestrian travel routes (Elk Pass, Kananaskis Pass and Smith Dorrien Valley) and one of only two possible east-west long-distance trail corridors in Kananaskis Country. While Kananaskis Country recreation policies direct this master plan to examine long-distance trail opportunities, present demand is low.

Many Highwood River tributaries possess old logging roads or other trails formerly used at low to high levels by riders both in summer and fall.

4.1.2 Demands for Equestrian Hunting Opportunities

Hunting with horses was the primary recreational equestrian activity within Kananaskis Country until the late 1960s (J. Burritt, AFS, verb. comm. February 1984). Increased use of off-road vehicles for hunting occurred here until 1977. Hunting with horses was widespread, though typically at lower use levels (few parties annually). The patterns of hunting with horses before the establishment of Kananaskis Country were as follows:

Day Use Only

Horses transported to area and used to get to hunting area or to haul out game. It is estimated five to 10 percent of horse use by hunters was day-use (R. Hill, AFS, verb. comm. June 1984).

Overnight

Roadside: Horses transported to area, usually a random camping locale, and day rides taken from this base. Most non-commercial overnight hunts were conducted this way.

Backcountry: Horses and camp trucked to area, camp set up and horses used to hunt. This was the commonest use pattern by outfitters.

Since changes in hunting regulations and restrictions on random roadside camping and off-road vehicle use in Kananaskis Country, the above activities have been altered or curtailed. The greatest change was in the pattern of overnight hunting use due to both the prohibition of random roadside camping as well as off-road travel restrictions. Camping must now occur in designated roadside campgrounds or more than a kilometre from designated roadways. This master plan should recognize the growing significance of horse-aided hunting in several parts of Kananaskis Country. Hunting-related use will be co-ordinated closely with Fish and Wildlife Division policies and regulations in the plan area. The provision of a variety of quality hunting experiences will be important. Recommendations are contained in Chapter 8.

4.1.3 Demand for Commercial Equestrian Services

Commercial riding is not widespread within Kananaskis Country. It is centred at four guest ranches and five outfitters in the Canmore Corridor, Ghost Valley and Bragg Creek vicinities (Map 4). As well, there is a pony stand and riding club near Canmore and an educational program at Yamnuska Centre. Up until about 10 years ago hunting outfitters used what has become Kananaskis Country. The reduction of non-resident hunting was mainly responsible for their decline.

Most commercial riding at the Yamnuska Centre and Rafter 6 Guest Ranch is hourly or day-ride on shorter trails. Formerly, a few longer overnight trips were organized. The Elkana Ranch, Crowfoot Trail Rides and Home Place Ranch in the Bragg Creek vicinity reportedly make occasional commercial use of trails in the Elbow District. An outfitter base for south Banff National Park exists on provincial lands near the Spray Reservoir. Quantitative aspects of demand for commercial services are treated in section 4.2, Projected Use.

Alberta Tourism and Small Business offers product development and promotional services in the adventure tour field and has worked with several operators in the vicinity of Kananaskis Country (K. Townsend, Travel Alberta, verb. comm. April 1982). Co-ordination of management and promotional efforts is required.

The Alberta Outfitter Policy was described in Chapter 2. The policy application in Kananaskis Country is recommended in Chapter 9; as well, there are recommendations concerning commercial developments and management.

4.2 Projected Use

Data reviewed to predict what quantitative demand there may be in the future for appropriate equestrian activities within Kananaskis Country included Projected Recreational Demands for Kananaskis Country 1980-2001 (Dyer 1980), Annual General Surveys (Alberta Recreation and Parks 1979 and 1980), 1979 and 1980 Kananaskis Country Annual General Recreation Surveys (Alberta Recreation and Parks, Alberta Forest Service). References cited in Lombard North's 1979 draft plan were also reviewed.

The above surveys provide some indications of demand projections but it is difficult to be accurate. There are too many unknowns in this market to do better at this time. Nevertheless, several points are made clear by the data:

1. Estimated participation rates in all equestrian activities in the region is 127 riders per 1000 population. This likely includes a majority on short (rented) trips, as well as those who participate in arena or competitive events and trail riding. Fully 25 per cent of the 18 to 24 age group who lived within 100 miles of Kananaskis Provincial Park participated in some riding while fewer than five per cent of the over 55-group did. Only 1.1 per cent of those groups surveyed in the 1980 Kananaskis Country Recreation Survey had one or more people who rode. This did not survey riding staging areas, however.
2. It is unlikely that there will be any serious opposition to the concept of trail riding in Kananaskis Country. It is a traditional activity viewed especially favorably by the young.

Some caution is advisable, however, in avoiding spending large sums of money on equestrian activities when other activities (such as picnicking, hiking and swimming) at present have significantly more participants. Clearly an appropriate balance is required.

3. Households located outside towns and cities (that is, on farms and acreages) have roughly twice the number of participants per household than those located in towns or cities. They also participate more often. This is likely to be a result of their having better access to places to keep and ride horses.
4. High-income households tend to have more participants than lower-income households. It is expensive to purchase, maintain and move horses by vehicle around the countryside. This suggests that most people would have to rent a horse, equipment and services to participate. This is further supported by the short length of stay of the majority of Kananaskis Country visitors. For marketing reasons, commercial equestrian facilities probably will have to be close to major-use nodes and major-access routes.
5. Given the short length of stay (60 per cent on weekend or overnight trips), it is likely that the demand for day-trail loops will exceed the demand for overnight trails, especially if commercial outfitters cater to this trade. Most use of public facilities occurs on weekends.
6. Riding and buggy clubs are established users of parts of Kananaskis Country and will continue to attract members. They

require roadside group-camping facilities and a suitable variety of trails. They also use land outside Kananaskis Country.

Lombard North (1979) consulted several other sources for demand projection data. These included American sources, the Horse Industry Branch of Alberta Agriculture, the University of Calgary Adult Education Division, and the Alberta Horsemen's Council (now Alberta Equestrian Federation). The existence of such agencies and services is another indicator of a growing interest in equestrian activities.

Consultation with knowledgeable retailers in the equestrian equipment business indicated that most of their trade is associated with arena or racing activities. Retailers felt that with facilities becoming available, the demand for trail-riding products would grow mostly from those who already own suitable stock. They also noted an increasing demand from tourists and residents for a variety of commercial equestrian services.

Similar informal discussions or review of file material with commercial trail-riding operators in Banff Park, Bragg Creek area and in the Canmore Corridor also indicated an increasing demand for a variety of services. Some specific preferences in planning consideration were noted. These range from trail locations, use and standards to Class I versus Class II Outfitter permits, to the importance of encouraging quality products.

More recently trail-riding demand data was solicited from the Recreation Division of Alberta Recreation and Parks, the Calgary Regional Planning Commission, several municipal recreation boards and the City of Calgary Parks and Recreation Division. No additional hard

survey data has been gathered by these agencies. Few references to trail-riding were contained in any of the many municipal recreation board surveys conducted in the region.

The Horse Industry Branch of Alberta Agriculture was able to provide estimates of the number of horses in the Calgary region usable for trail riding. These estimates run as follows:

-- Total Alberta horse population (1982)	150 000
Total in Calgary region (80 km radius)	50 000
-- Approximately 66 per cent of these are either not used actively or are brood mares leaving	17 000
-- Approximate number estimated to be specialized competitive horses (racing, show, etc.) not used for pleasure riding	5 000
-- Number for pleasure riding	12 000

Implications of these and participation rate figures are as follows:

1. Participation in all kinds of equestrian activities approximates 12.7 per cent of the regional population. This amounts to 88 900 residents who engage in some form of riding.
2. It is estimated that there are 12 000 horses in the Calgary region actively used for pleasure riding. This number is expected to increase (D. Milligan, Horse Industry Branch, Alberta Agriculture, verb. comm. May 1983). Most riding presumably occurs close to where the animals are kept, as transport of horses is relatively costly and difficult.

If it is assumed that 50 per cent or 6000 horses will be (eventually) used annually on trail rides in Kananaskis Country, an assessment of the adequacy of currently approved Kananaskis Country equestrian facilities is possible.

Three further assumptions are required: first, regarding frequency of use (here taken as 1.5 visits per horse annually); second, regarding average party size (taken to be two horses); and third, that 90 per cent of use will occur on weekends and that 75 per cent of that weekend use will require an equestrian camping unit (as opposed to a trailhead parking area). These assumptions are based on informed judgment. The calculations follow:

6 000 horses x 1.5 average = visits/year/horse	9 000 horse- days
9 000 horse-days ÷ 2 horses/party =	4 500 horse parties per year
Assume 90% of use occurs on weekends = 0.90 x 4 500 =	4 050
Estimated average number of horse parties per weekend (mid-May to mid-Sept.) 4 050 ÷ 18 weekends =	225
Assume 75% require camping unit = 0.75 x 225 parties/weekend =	169
Assume 2 parties/km of designated trails, or	
$\frac{225 \text{ parties/km}}{2 \text{ parties}}$	113 km

Therefore, approximately 169 equestrian camping units, 69 units of trailhead parking and 113 km of trail would be required

on an average weekend day in the above scheme. This will increase as numbers of participants or the frequency of their trips increases. There are now 236 units of approved or built equestrian camping units in Kananaskis Country. There are presently 149 units of equestrian trailhead parking approved or built. Since most use occurs on July and August weekends, facilities are more likely to be full then. Trailhead parking capacity will be shared by hikers, fishermen, picknickers and others.

3. If the above assumptions are reasonable, it appears that rather than having to meet a shortfall in quantitative demand, this plan should mainly address qualitative aspects of demand. It should attempt to provide opportunities for equestrian use in appropriate Kananaskis Country locales. The pattern of recent equestrian use suggests where and how the scope of the existing program should be broadened. This would include primitive back-country experiences, hunting access, opportunities for long-distance trips or trips over traditional or historical routes.
4. A measure of actual use of equestrian camping facilities recently constructed in the Turner Valley District provides another indication of demand for such facilities. The use to date has been light to moderate overall but heavy on several weekends. Poor road access or road construction has prevented many people from getting to the Bluerock campground. Equestrian users at North Fork have to compete for space with non-equestrian campers. Use at Sandy McNabb Equestrian Campground was judged

to be less affected by such factors. Use here in 1982 was as follows:

- Length of season mid-May to mid-October (approx.)
- Full or overfull on May 24th long weekend
- From 50 to 95% full (25 to 46 units) on July and August weekends
- Less than 50% full on weekends in May, June, September and October
- Light use during the week

The existence and nature of these facilities and trails is still not widely known in the region. As they become better known and road and trailhead construction is completed in the Sheep, Elbow and Jumpingpound valleys, increased use is expected.

5. This plan must also recognize that of approximately 89 000 residents in the Calgary region who engage in equestrian activities, between 20 000 and 40 000 do so with their own horses. This suggests a market of approximately 50 000 people in the region who engage annually in equestrian activities on rented or borrowed horses. The number of participants is expected to increase with increased quality opportunities in the rental or adventure holiday field. More foreign guests are inquiring into trail ride opportunities (Ken Townsend, Travel Alberta, verb. comms., May 1984). Several pony stands or guest ranches exist in the Calgary region already. Use data from 12 of the existing facilities was tallied and totalled

approximately 25 000 horse-days* in 1982. This did not include all rental outlets or the Stampede or those who borrowed horses.

Kananaskis Country can provide opportunities for a portion of this increasing rental market. Its distance from the city of Calgary (the primary market) and the presence of several hourly ride establishments within or closer to the city suggests a limited potential for a pony stand type of operation. The good road access, extensive public equestrian facilities and back-country characteristics of Kananaskis Country make it suited to more extensive overnight camping trips in the backcountry with horses for those operators with a base outside the boundaries or at locales like the Ribbon Creek Alpine Village.

*A horse-days is defined here as any day a horse is rented for more than three hours.

5. ASSESSMENT OF EXISTING EQUESTRIAN PROGRAM

The approved preliminary equestrian master plan (Lombard North 1979) called for a three-phase development program. This included 448 km of trails, six staging areas, numerous trailheads and several back-country campsites. Specific locations, designs and standards are contained in the draft plan.

An evaluation of these approved developments has been done on a formal and an informal basis by several members of the Alberta Forest Service and equestrian users as well as representatives on the Kananaskis Citizens Advisory Committee. In addition, evaluative comments by the Equestrian Review Group have been incorporated.

5.1 Policies

- A. Lombard North was directed to look at the Elbow-Sheep and Canmore Corridor sub-regions only. Recent policy changes indicated that horse use could occur on a more limited basis in the Kananaskis-Spray. This would allow selected linking trails and day-use loops associated with traditional horse-travel routes and viable commercial guest ranches/pony stands. The selection would be based on high recreation potential, minimal environmental impact and minimal land-use conflicts. Moreover,

in 1982 the southern boundary of Kananaskis Country was extended approximately 18 km further south to include Plateau Mountain and vicinity. Summer and fall recreational riding is traditional in much of this area. Equestrian use in this additional area should be addressed.

Previous recreation development policy directed that a wide range of equestrian opportunities should be provided for in Kananaskis Country. This would include a variety of day and overnight rides on designated trails as well as more primitive opportunities utilizing a variety of existing old trails or routes. These primitive trails or routes would not be developed, mapped or maintained to the same standards as the more travelled designated trails. An extensive system of designated trails, developed campgrounds and trailheads now exists in the Elbow-Sheep. The Highwood offers some good opportunities for more primitive trail experiences. The network of existing trails, the physical barrier of the Highwood River, the extensive scenic trailless area, grizzly bears and other natural hazards suggest this would be appropriate. However, the attractiveness of the area plus the high-standard highway through the main valley may make lower use levels in the tributary valley difficult to maintain. Some attractive and more accessible areas of the Highwood like Picklejar Lakes are already heavily used.

No existing equestrian policy statements refer specifically to the Highwood. More general policies do restrict developments in the Highwood to extensive trail-related or day-use roadside

types. Roadside camping is restricted to Etherington and Cataract creeks. Random backcountry camping is allowed. Present policies are based mainly on concerns for maintaining viable wildlife populations and on the desire to maintain low-intensity backcountry recreation with little formal development or facilities.

More explicit policies for equestrian use and development in the Highwood, the south end and parts of the Kananaskis-Spray are required. They should reflect the significant wildlife concerns, and the desirability of providing more primitive trail opportunities. They must also recognize that the potential demand for access into and capability of certain Highwood or south end areas is high and/or likely to increase.

- B. The issuance of road use permits to equestrian backcountry users to haul feed and supplies leads to difficult management decisions or issues such as: - Who is eligible, how many, how often? - Why should hunters or others not have the same opportunity? - Vehicles in backcountry areas detract significantly from a quality experience. This policy should be reviewed with a view to phasing out and reclaiming all roads not essential for management purposes and severely restricting all off-road vehicle use. Furthermore, a policy to encourage packing in feed and to restrict grazing by recreational stock should be developed. These are presented in Chapter 8, Recommendations.
- C. The Sibbald Flats-Jumpingpound area may not be the best area in Kananaskis Country to develop another commercial trail-riding

operation. Demand data strongly suggest pony stands should be close to major developments (for example, Alpine Village) or on major highways. No major development is at present planned at this location.

- D. More specific policies guiding commercial and non-commercial equestrian development, management and operation should be provided. These are presented in Chapters 8 and 9.

5.2 Planning

- A. Where feasible, one or more link trails should be established between camping or trailhead nodes. This would improve user distribution, increase the variety of rides and provide opportunities for longer rides through Kananaskis Country and adjoining lands. Desirable corridors are marked on Map 8.
- B. A limited number of designated backcountry campsites should be established in more popular areas. This facilitates positive agency responses to public requests about "where can we camp?" It may also reduce conflicts, hazards or impacts. Opportunities for random camping in the backcountry should be available in areas of lower use and suitable environments. An active back-country visitor information and education program should be developed to reduce impacts and conflicts.
- C. The conflict potential between hikers and riders should be minimized where possible. Evidence shows, however, that much of the conflict is due to higher numbers of both kinds of users on

a poorly drained trail. Well-located and maintained trails and the low- to moderate-use levels on most trails proposed for horse use will not result in unacceptable levels of conflict. A greater degree of separation is required in the proximity of campgrounds or major trailheads.

- D. Potential for hunting outfitters within Kananaskis Country appears poor due to the extent and levels of public access, resident hunting and restrictions on non-resident hunting. There may be a demand for horses or wagons to assist in hauling out game.

5.3 Designs/Layout (Campgrounds, Trailheads, Trails)

- A. Due to significant health and security considerations, the centralized corral facility is better suited for group-camp situations than non-group campgrounds. Horse-holding facilities should be located adjacent to camping units and might consist of a hitching rail or small holding pen. A conceptual plan for an equestrian campground and horse-holding facility is included in Appendix B.
- B. Location of trails and trailheads must be determined as part of overall campground or trailhead layout. This should make the actual trailhead very clear to all users and minimize hazards and conflicts among vehicles, other users and riders as well as minimize impacts on streams, soils and vegetation. Also, trail-head and campground capacity should be co-ordinated with a

defined, desirable level of use on trails/areas served by that trailhead. These recommendations are included in Chapter 8.

- C. A range of trail standards is required to reflect the range of use levels and intensities. This would include high-standard, double-width, surfaced trails near major facilities where drainage is poor, and a majority of unsurfaced single-tread trails. It should also include low-standard routes that are used occasionally. This is recommended in Chapter 8.

5.4 Appropriate Equestrian Activities

Historical and recent use has set a pattern and created certain images of appropriate equestrian activity within Kananaskis Country. This is described as trailriding and is predominantly western in character. The stock is the type used for range work and is suitable for mountain country. Horses are ridden more than they are led. They are also used as pack animals. The horse and buggy (or wagon) mode is also represented and at least one local club is interested in driving on suitable old roads and trails. Within Kananaskis Country no special facilities have yet been planned or built for wagon use. Recommended standards and requirements are provided in Appendix B. What will probably develop in the next few years are variations on this particular western theme as well as imported ideas, stock and techniques.

Several requests have been made recently to hold competitive trailrides or charitable fund-raising rides (Cancer Ride-a-thon) in Kananaskis Country. Agency response has varied depending on factors

such as timing, location, numbers of participants and requirements for off-road vehicle use. Recent discussions with organizers have been directed toward reducing impact, conflicts and any special authority required to hold such events on Crown lands.

It is not possible to predict what new equestrian-like demands will be made over the years in Kananaskis Country. Each will have to be assessed for appropriateness and implications when first made known to recreation managers.

It is assumed here that, overall, the wildland or natural character of Kananaskis Country is to be retained. This would preclude proposals for guest ranches or similar facility-intensive developments except at existing or proposed facility nodes (for example, Canmore, Ribbon Creek Village).

5.5 Equestrian Experience Goals for Kananaskis Country

The following goals are based mainly on the foregoing information and assessment. They are intended to focus attention on those specific equestrian activities appropriate to Kananaskis Country. They consider traditional use, current and projected demands, current policies, plans and management of Kananaskis Country. They are termed experience goals because it is the qualities of the recreation experience that are ultimately being sought (by users) and provided for. Whether they are met, where, how, when and to what extent will depend on quantitative demand, resource and land-use considerations as well as budgetary constraints.

1. To be conveniently able to obtain good pre-trip information in order to help select a suitable area and plan the trip (for example, location and description of facilities, primitive to developed settings, use levels, regulations, hazards, what to do in an emergency).
2. To have a wide choice of day and overnight rides/drives available. These will vary in length (duration), difficulty, facility standard, scenery, degree of solitude, hunting qualities, and other land uses (or signs of uses) encountered. The range of choice is described as the Backcountry Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (BROC), referred to in Chapter 7.
3. To be able to hire horses and/or guides and equipment for a variety of purposes. These would range from hourly rides to full-day rides and overnight guest ranch or camping trips. It would also include being able to hire horses, wagons and handlers to assist in hauling out game.
4. To have good vehicle access to convenient parking and/or staging areas.
5. To experience minimal conflicts with other recreationists.
6. To be conveniently able to obtain up-to-date information on such things as fire and flood hazards, regulations, bears, etc., just before starting out on the trip.
7. To have a minimum of direct management control (rules and regulations) imposed on these activities.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL AND LAND-USE CONSIDERATIONS

Suggested equestrian developments in the preceding chapter were based primarily on past use and demand data. These are assessed further in this chapter in view of environmental and land-use considerations. A list of final recommendations follows in Chapter 8.

Relevant environmental and land-use data were obtained either from integrated resource planning (IRP) documents or from various land-management agency personnel. The recently approved land-use zoning map and resource management policy document for Kananaskis Country (Alberta Department of Energy and Natural Resources, Resource Evaluation and Planning Division 1982) was reviewed to determine how well the proposed equestrian developments fit existing zoning. A summary of land-management intents and priorities follows for the various resource management areas. No major conflicts were identified.

More specific land-use and environmental concerns not presented in IRP documents or maps are summarized on Table 1. Areas of concern for fish or wildlife are presented as Zone 2 on Map 5. It must be recognized that many areas critical to wildlife are also included within Zone 1, and in some cases, within other zones.

6.1 Summary of Selected Management Intents and Priorities for
Kananaskis Country Resource Management Areas*

A. Resource Management Area A (Kananaskis/Spray)

Management intent:

- Environmental preservation.
- Dispersed, extensive recreation in addition to intensive recreation developments along major roads in Kananaskis and Spray valleys.

Management priorities:

- Provision of a wide range of leisure and recreation opportunities.
- Maintenance and enhancement of the fish and wildlife resources and opportunities for their use.

B. Resource Management Area B (Upper Elbow-Sheep)

Management intent:

- Environment and esthetic preservation and conservation.
- Dispersed backcountry recreational activities will be allowed.
- Elbow-Sheep summit access road will be permanently closed.

Management priorities:

- Maintenance of the abundance, diversity, distribution and recreational use of the fish and wildlife resource.
- Provision of a limited range of extensive, non-mechanized recreational opportunities.

* Selected on the basis of being most relevant to equestrian planning.

C. Resource Management Area C (Elbow-Jumpingpound)

Management intent:

- Multiple resource use with priority for recreation along the Elbow Fall and Powderface trails. Priority resource areas will be recognized.

Management priorities:

- Provision of recreational opportunities.
- Provision for management and development of a variety of natural resources.
- Maintenance and enhancement of the fish and wildlife resources and their recreational use.

D. Resource Management Area D (Sheep-Threepoint)

Management intent:

- Multiple resource use with priority for valuable fisheries and wildlife resource protection.

Management priorities:

- Management to retain or enhance natural landscapes.
- Multiple resource use.
- Protection of fish and wildlife resources and opportunities for their use.
- Provision of a range of recreational opportunities.

E. Resource Management Area E (Highwood)

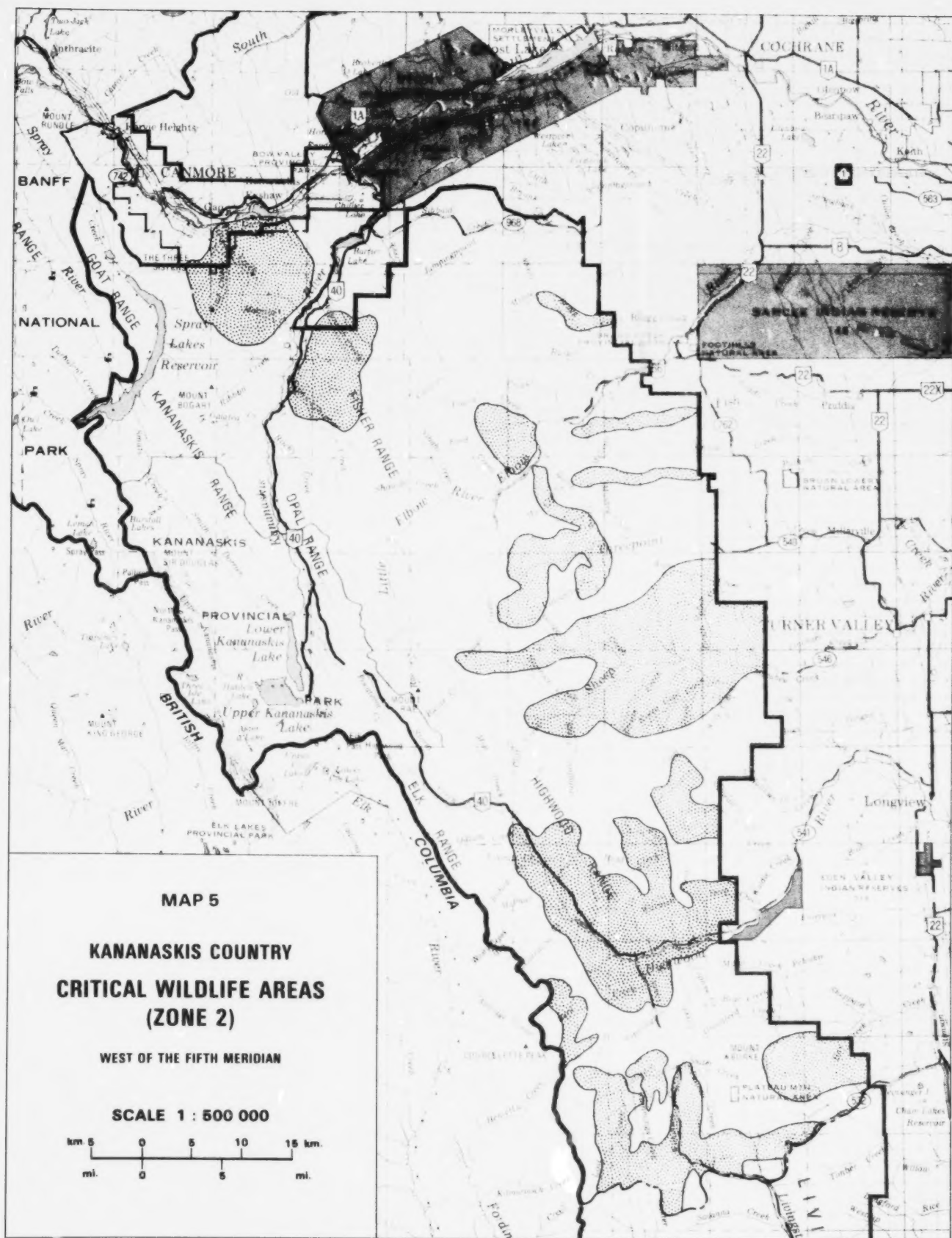
Management intent:

- Preservation and conservation of valuable esthetic and wildlife resources.
- Resource management and recreational development will be allowed only where they do not conflict with the main intent.

Management priorities:

- Retain or enhance natural landscape values.
- Retain or enhance fish and wildlife resources and opportunities for their use.
- Provision of a limited range of recreational opportunities (that is, extensive, non-mechanized summer use only. Only limited backcountry and highway-oriented day-use facility development will be provided).

The foregoing assessments were considered along with assessments of policy issues, historic trail use, demand data, and construction and management factors in making recommendations in Chapter 8.



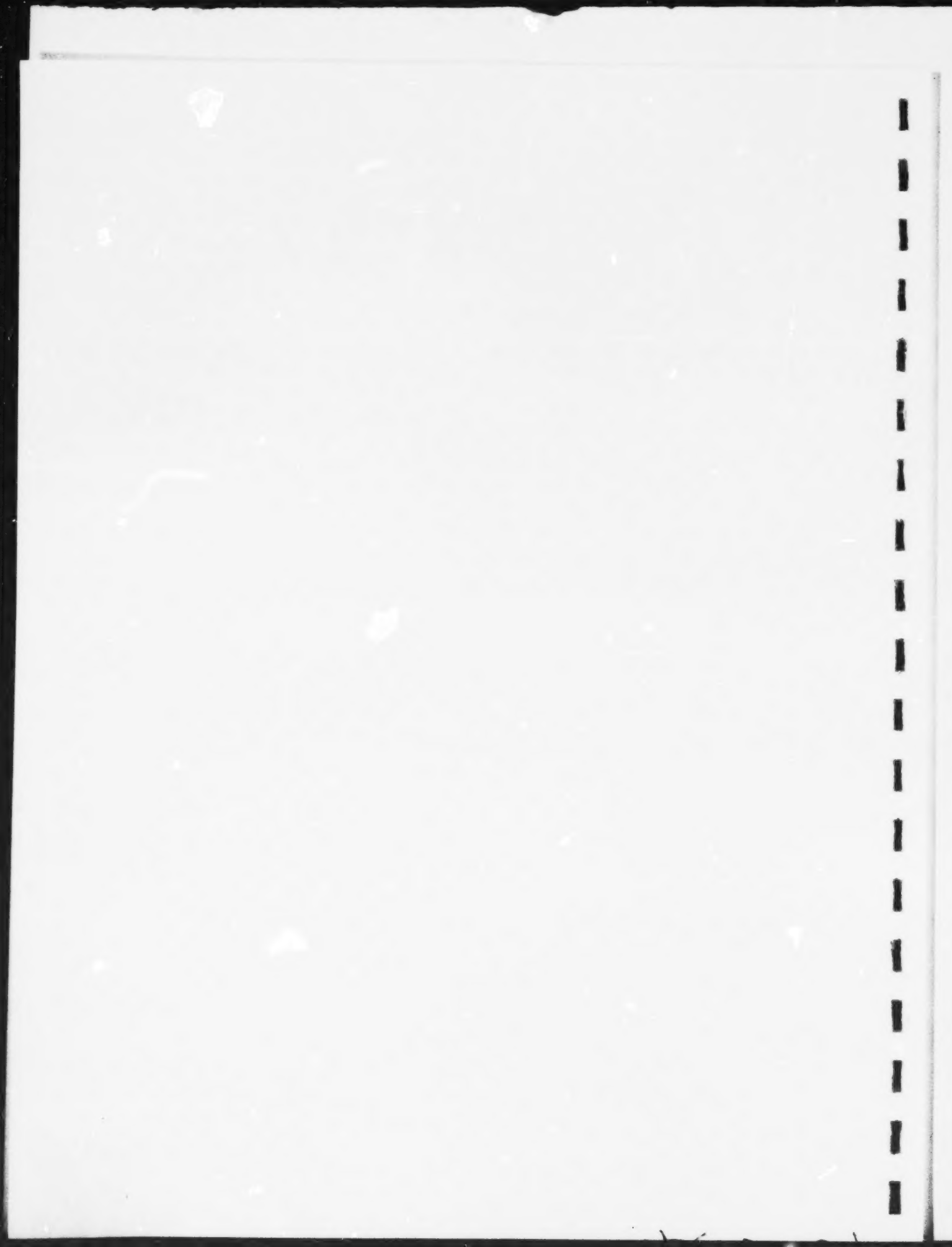


TABLE 1

ASSESSMENT OF SUGGESTED EQUESTRIAN DEVELOPMENTS

Suggested Development*	Demand Priority**	Significant Environmental Factors	Significant Land-Use Factors	Assessment of Development
A. Canmore Corridor sub-region				
1. South Bow Valley Park				
a) Campground	3	--Xeric site	--High levels of non-equestrian public recreation activity nearby	--Use conflicts have been addressed in conceptual plan
			--Presence of two guest ranches and Yamnuska Centre in vicinity	--Limited separate day-riding trail potential reduces demand for campground
b) Trailhead	2	--Xeric site	--See above	--Equestrian trail development potential is limited by biophysical conditions and/or conflict potential with hikers and cyclists
				--Public facilities will ease management of existing commercial activity (Rafter 6, Yamnuska Centre)

*Based on demand.

**Priority: 1, Very desirable in near future; 2, Desirable in near future; 3, For future consideration.

(continued on next page)

TABLE 1 (Continued)

ASSESSMENT OF SUGGESTED EQUESTRIAN DEVELOPMENTS

Suggested Development*	Demand Priority**	Significant Environmental Factors	Significant Land-Use Factors	Assessment of Development
2. Wind Pigeon				
a) Trailhead	2	--None known	--Power line and roads in vicinity --Hiking use moderate here --Private lands and lease (Pigeon Mtn.) in vicinity	--Desirable to designate a trailhead so as to simplify K.C. enforcement and reduce unauthorized use of private or lease land
			--Bow-hunting activity in vicinity is occasionally done on horseback. Need for hunting access with horses	--Trailhead should be for shared use
			--Traditional hiking trailhead for Mt. Allan and other trails	
b) Allow continued use on existing undesignated trail	2-3	--Potential impact on elk and sheep	--Power line and roads form the route	--Wildlife concerns and presence of utility line reduce desirability

*Based on demand.

**Priority: 1, Very desirable in near future; 2, Desirable in near future; 3, For future consideration.

(continued on next page)

TABLE 1 (Continued)

ASSESSMENT OF SUGGESTED EQUESTRIAN DEVELOPMENTS

Suggested Development*	Demand Priority**	Significant Environmental Factors	Significant Land-Use Factors	Assessment of Development
c) Link trails/routes to Wind Valley/Spray	3	--Steep, rocky terrain on pass over to Spray Valley --Important sheep/elk ranges and movement corridors in West Wind Valley have been recognized at ministerial level by prohibiting any new trail development	--May require agreement with TransAlta Utilities --Existing roads and trails --Private lands present trespass problems --Moderate levels of day hiking on Mt. Allan Trail, Pigeon Mtn. and West Wind Valley --Private land in Wind and West Wind Valley. A major recreational village development proposed for this private land	--Future designation as link trail should be based clearly on defined need --Present land tenure precludes any legal public trail travel in West Wind Valley unless agreement is reached with landowner. This appears unnecessary for equestrian purposes --Priority for hiking use to be addressed in Canmore Spray Master Plan --High scenic quality and good access for day trips or link to Spray in conflict with important sheep ranges and high cost of trail development to Spray

*Based on demand.

**Priority: 1, Very desirable in near future; 2, Desirable in near future; 3, For future consideration.

(continued on next page)

TABLE 1 (Continued)

ASSESSMENT OF SUGGESTED EQUESTRIAN DEVELOPMENTS

Suggested Development*	Demand Priority**	Significant Environmental Factors	Significant Land-Use Factors	Assessment of Development
3. Deadman Flats to Canmore				
a) Link trail/route	3	--Localized poor drainage --Sheep and elk use of licks and meadows	--Potential land ownership changes though at present private and lease lands in vicinity limit routing options --Route parallels a major highway (Trans-Canada) --Extensive existing roads, trails and former mine facilities --Close to town of Canmore where demand for trail-riding opportunities appears to be increasing	--Prime value of this trail/route appears as link in long-distance riding opportunity from K.C. to Banff National Park --Good existing trails and old roads on private lands --If proposed developments proceed in Canmore and vicinity, demand for day-riding trails here will increase
b) Trailhead and link trail to Spray Valley (Whiteman Gap)	3	--Steep cross slope on route	--Old existing trail	

*Based on demand.

**Priority: 1, Very desirable in near future; 2, Desirable in near future; 3, For future consideration.

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TABLE 1 (Continued)

ASSESSMENT OF SUGGESTED EQUESTRIAN DEVELOPMENTS

Suggested Development*	Demand Priority**	Significant Environmental Factors	Significant Land-Use Factors	Assessment of Development
99	c)	Multi-use trail between Canmore and Banff in Bow Valley	2	--None known
				--Possible difficulties with hydro facilities and roads in Whiteman Gap
				--May be feasible but desirability questionable for occasional public equestrian use. May be shared with hikers
				--Development of trailhead facilities at Canmore and Goat Creek tied to this trail consideration
				--Higher use levels would see conflict between hikers and horses increase
				--Feasible and desirable but dependent on co-ordinated planning and management development by several agencies
				--Trailhead development at both ends requires co-ordination
				--Present low priority due to low demand for long-distance rides and present land-use constraints

*Based on demand.

**Priority: 1, Very desirable in near future; 2, Desirable in near future; 3, For future consideration.

(continued on next page)

TABLE 1 (Continued)

ASSESSMENT OF SUGGESTED EQUESTRIAN DEVELOPMENTS

Suggested Development*	Demand Priority**	Significant Environmental Factors	Significant Land-Use Factors	Assessment of Development
4. Canmore vicinity				
a) Pony stand and loop trails	1	--Depends on location chosen	--Many variables affect choice of location (see ID 8 and Canmore town plans). This includes Olympic Nordic site and summer trail developments	--Suitable sites may exist where a combined non-commercial, educational and commercial facility could be established
b) Holding facilities for local horses	1	--Some steep slopes and poorly drained areas --Currently, very limited grazing potential	--Extensive mining or quarrying and hydro-electric developments in vicinity	--Recommend this proposal to ID 8 and Public Lands Division
5. Spray Valley	3	--None known	--Provides trail access to Banff National Park --Light non-commercial equestrian use acceptable to Banff National Park (T. Ross, Banff National Park, verb. comm., October 1981)	--Desirable to maintain lower levels of public horse use due to Banff National Park preferences --At present low potential for day rides --Not required for long-distance travel
a) Goat Creek trailhead				

*Based on demand.

**Priority: 1, Very desirable in near future; 2, Desirable in near future; 3, For future consideration.

(continued on next page)

TABLE 1 (Continued)

ASSESSMENT OF SUGGESTED EQUESTRIAN DEVELOPMENTS

Suggested Development*	Demand Priority**	Significant Environmental Factors	Significant Land-Use Factors	Assessment of Development
b) Trail link from Goat Creek along west shore of Spray Reservoir	3	--None known except possible reclamation difficulties in high-elevation areas	--Existing public and private road along west-shore Spray Reservoir	--To be considered in approved Canmore-Spray recreation planning process currently underway --May be combined with hiking facility. Low level of public horse use will result in low conflict potential --Not a priority for equestrian use but may be combined with hiking use if road closed to public vehicles --To be considered in Canmore-Spray recreation planning currently underway
c) Backcountry camp-ground	3	--See above	--See above	--At least one would be required if trail designated

*Based on demand.

**Priority: 1, Very desirable in near future; 2, Desirable in near future; 3, For future consideration.

(continued on next page)

TABLE 1 (Continued)

ASSESSMENT OF SUGGESTED EQUESTRIAN DEVELOPMENTS

Suggested Development*	Demand Priority**	Significant Environmental Factors	Significant Land-Use Factors	Assessment of Development
d) Watridge (Upper Spray) trailhead and south Banff access trail	3	--Short growing season --Some poorly drained areas near Watridge Lake --Watridge Lake quality fishery will be slightly impacted by low levels of equestrian traffic, though hiker impacts are already significant	--Extensive previous logging in vicinity --Public road access under development --Any access improvement will increase fishing activity at Watridge Lake --Banff National Park considers it desirable to relocate a trailhead for south Banff to this location. Co-ordinated planning is required	--Not a priority for long-distance equestrian travel. Trailhead development would be mainly for hiker and commercial outfitter access to Banff Park. This is to be assessed in Spray master plan --Occasional use by riders would not warrant a separate facility. It should be shared whether with hiking trailhead or outfitter facilities if developed
e) Smith Dorrien link trail (Spray Reservoir through Kananaskis Park core area to Elbow Lake (trailhead))	2	--Localized poor drainage --Short growing season --Several grizzly bear feeding areas and travel routes along route	--Major parallel road in narrow valley --Extensive previous logging --Historical trail ride route	--Feasible as link trail between Elbow-Sheep and Banff Park-Spray --Desirability low to moderate to majority of recreation riders, due to proximity of highway, logging and linear nature

*Based on demand.

**Priority: 1, Very desirable in near future; 2, Desirable in near future; 3, For future consideration.

(continued on next page)

TABLE 1 (Continued)

ASSESSMENT OF SUGGESTED EQUESTRIAN DEVELOPMENTS

Suggested Development*	Demand Priority**	Significant Environmental Factors	Significant Land-Use Factors	Assessment of Development
f) Burstall Pass (Mud Lake) trail and trailhead	2	--Short sections of poor drainage --Short growing season/season of use --Grizzly feeding/travel areas in pass --Higher use levels and increased impacts on soils/vegetation are very undesirable	--Hiker trailhead/trail to pass and Banff National Park --Banff National Park at present manages adjacent Upper Spray Valley for low levels of day-hiking, back-country hiking and commercial horse use	--It is the best alternative for designation as a long-distance riding trail to link the Elbow-Sheep with Banff National Park --Feasible and desirable but potential conflict with hikers and impacts on fragile environment is a concern. May also effect Banff National Park management
g) Smith Dorrien back-country campsite	3	--Above comments apply	--Major highway in close proximity --Extensive previous logging	--Necessary if link trail built due to distance between Upper Spray and Kananaskis Park core area

*Based on demand.

**Priority: 1, Very desirable in near future; 2, Desirable in near future; 3, For future consideration.

(continued on next page)

TABLE 1 (Continued)

ASSESSMENT OF SUGGESTED EQUESTRIAN DEVELOPMENTS

Suggested Development*	Demand Priority**	Significant Environmental Factors	Significant Land-Use Factors	Assessment of Development
6. Kananaskis Valley				
a) Core Area campsite (backcountry type)	2	--Good sites may be limited by poor drainage	--Numerous other existing recreation facilities and activities	--Low desirability because backcountry campsite may conflict with park management zones --Feasible but contingent on link trail through park being developed --If trail developed, campsite required due to distance from next available campsite
b) Elbow Lake trail-head	1	--None known	--Existing hiker trail-head and popular day-hiking trail to Elbow Lake	--Highest equestrian use in hunting season --Desirable to reduce potential conflict with hikers at trailhead and on trail to Elbow Lake --Present facilities overfull already on weekend days. Expansion desirable

*Based on demand.

**Priority: 1, Very desirable in near future; 2, Desirable in near future; 3, For future consideration.

(continued on next page)

TABLE 1 (Continued)

ASSESSMENT OF SUGGESTED EQUESTRIAN DEVELOPMENTS

Suggested Development*	Demand Priority**	Significant Environmental Factors	Significant Land-Use Factors	Assessment of Development
c) Linking trail (Elbow/Sheep to Spray) (see 5e)				--May be feasible to designate a portion of existing trailhead for equestrian use at lower use periods
d) Elk Pass Trail and trailhead	3	--None known; would use old vehicle road	--Several existing trails/old roads along route will help to minimize potential conflicts with hikers --B.C. Parks and B.C. Forest Service are not prepared to manage more than occasional horse use at this time (J. Coates, B.C. Forest Service, and C. Sadler, B.C. Parks, pers. comm.)	--Feasible but currently low demand --Historic nature of pass raises desirability --Designation should be done in conjunction with B.C. agencies --No development costs --Hiker conflict minimal with low equestrian use --Concern for increasing conflict should demand increase

*Based on demand.

**Priority: 1, Very desirable in near future; 2, Desirable in near future; 3, For future consideration.

(continued on next page)

TABLE 1 (Continued)
ASSESSMENT OF SUGGESTED EQUESTRIAN DEVELOPMENTS

Suggested Development*	Demand Priority**	Significant Environmental Factors	Significant Land-Use Factors	Assessment of Development
e) Evan-Thomas trailhead	1	--None known	--Location pending --Portion nearby of Wedge Pond day-use area may be designated for horse use but there is some potential for conflict with other users	--Designation required of suitable separate trailhead for low-level use in Evan Thomas Valley. This is associated mainly with small trailride parties and hunting
f) Evan-Thomas route and primitive campsite	1	--Important summer elk and sheep range in upper Evan Thomas and tributaries must be avoided --Localized sensitive alpine terrain in pass areas over into Little Elbow	--Previous logging and coal exploration/mining has resulted in existing trails/routes --One of traditional trail routes linking Elbow and Kananaskis valleys --Poplar elk hunting valley	--Desirable to manage as a primitive area. Assess need for trail reclamation and designated backcountry campsites. Develop specific management guidelines

*Based on demand.

**Priority: 1, Very desirable in near future; 2, Desirable in near future; 3, For future consideration.

(continued on next page)

TABLE 1 (Continued)

ASSESSMENT OF SUGGESTED EQUESTRIAN DEVELOPMENTS

Suggested Development*	Demand Priority**	Significant Environmental Factors	Significant Land-Use Factors	Assessment of Development
g) Galatea-Buller trail and trailheads	3	--Sensitive or rugged terrain. Would require costly up-grading of trails and restrictions on horse travel	--High hiking use	--Most scenic link trail but very rugged terrain and high conflict potential. Seasonal restrictions inappropriate for link trail
h) Ribbon Village pony stand	2	--None known	--Other facilities and non-equestrian activities in vicinity of proposed village --One of few locales in K.C. with apparent potential for viable pony stand (assuming full development of village proceeds) --Constraints include major roads, Kanana-ski's River, hikers, golf course and areas of wildlife concern --Several existing trails in vicinity that may be suitable	--Feasibility requires more detailed review of village development and operation as well as with knowledgeable operator. --Also, more detailed review of development capability of area required

*Based on demand.

**Priority: 1, Very desirable in near future; 2, Desirable in near future; 3, For future consideration.

(continued on next page)

TABLE 1 (Continued)

ASSESSMENT OF SUGGESTED EQUESTRIAN DEVELOPMENTS

Suggested Development*	Demand Priority**	Significant Environmental Factors	Significant Land-Use Factors	Assessment of Development
i) Ribbon Village to Barrier Dam link trail/route	2	--None known	--Trail would utilize parts or all of existing power line access trail --Currently used occasionally by Rafter 6 Guest Ranch --Would require agreement with TransAlta Utilities	--Standard and priority contingent on pony stand development, agreement with TransAlta utilities and other demand features (such as use at Bow Valley South and Rafter 6 Ranch)
j) Ribbon Village trailhead	2	--Depending on use levels, timing and specific backcountry areas utilized, may have an impact on elk or sheep ranges, especially Mt. Allan and Pigeon Mtn.	--Area of intensive development and potential conflict with other recreational uses	--Feasibility contingent on finding a suitable site and review of potential impacts and conflicts. Designate appropriate trails within gazetted Recreation Area
k) Barrier Lake West Shore backcountry group camp	1	--Potential shoreline impact --Cold water temperature	--Service vehicle access would utilize TransAlta dam and power line	--Contingent on other non-equestrian groups having access by reservation plus agreement with TransAlta Utilities

*Based on demand.

**Priority: 1, Very desirable in near future; 2, Desirable in near future; 3, For future consideration.

(continued on next page)

TABLE 1 (Continued)

ASSESSMENT OF SUGGESTED EQUESTRIAN DEVELOPMENTS

Suggested Development*	Demand Priority**	Significant Environmental Factors	Significant Land-Use Factors	Assessment of Development
7. Highwood Valley				
Continue to allow equestrian use throughout the Highwood	1-3	--Concern for goats, sheep, elk and grizzly impacts/conflicts in selected locales --Fragile soils and vegetation at Picklejar Lakes being impacted --High elevation areas with short growing season --Concern for maintaining high-quality fishery especially at Carnarvon and McPhail Lakes and in Cataract Creek --Sheep range in Zephyr Pass --High water in Highwood River would be hazardous to ford	--Extensive existing trails and roads are used now --Higher summer-hiking use levels on Lantern Creek causing unacceptable damage --Some future logging plans for upper Cataract Valley --Pictographs in Upper Zephyr Creek are a designated historic site --Important fall hunting area as well as scenic hiking and trail-riding potential	--Desirable from long-term recreation management viewpoint to retain this portion of K.C. as a less developed, less heavily used area --Feasible and desirable to continue to expand monitoring efforts to identify areas that may need more intensive management actions --Little or no physical development of trails/routes required. Reclamation or relocation may be required where erosion/siltation a problem --Consider need to restrict horse traffic on Lantern Creek trail

*Based on demand.

**Priority: 1, Very desirable in near future; 2, Desirable in near future; 3, For future consideration.

(continued on next page)

TABLE 1 (Continued)

ASSESSMENT OF SUGGESTED EQUESTRIAN DEVELOPMENTS

Suggested Development*	Demand Priority**	Significant Environmental Factors	Significant Land-Use Factors	Assessment of Development
<u>Trailheads</u>				
a) Mist Creek	1	--Concern to maintain existing wildlife and cattle forage; consider this in location and design of site	--Proposed (approved) day-use development at Cataract and Willow Creek would incorporate trailhead function	--Salter Pass trail poses minimal conflict with Plateau Mountain Ecological Reserve
b) Lantern Creek	3			
c) Odium/Loomis	1			
d) Cat Creek	1	--None at sites proposed	--Existing trailhead day-use sites have been developed considering environmental concerns	--Zephyr Creek priority low, reflecting demand and historic site
e) Fitzsimmons	2			
f) Baril Creek	3			
g) Etherington	1	--Wildlife and recreation management concerns will increase if use level increases significantly	--Shared use of existing Mist, Fitzsimmons, Etherington and Sentinel appears feasible for now.	--New construction for Odium/Loomis, Raspberry Road, Cataract and Indian Graves is required
h) Raspberry Lookout Road	1			
i) Cataract	1			
j) Sentinel D.U.	1			
k) Indian Graves	1			

*Based on demand.

**Priority: 1, Very desirable in near future; 2, Desirable in near future; 3, For future consideration.

(continued on next page)

TABLE 1 (Continued)

ASSESSMENT OF SUGGESTED EQUESTRIAN DEVELOPMENTS

Suggested Development*	Demand Priority**	Significant Environmental Factors	Significant Land-Use Factors	Assessment of Development
<u>Campgrounds</u>				
a) Etherington	1	--None known	--Might utilize existing snowmobile staging area with addition of hitching rails, manure bins and user information	--Expansion of Cat Creek and Lantern Creek is desirable. --Feasible and urgent, particularly during hunting season --Would be only equestrian roadside campground in Highwood
b) Overnight camping at day-use sites	1	--Not applicable	--Existing sites not designed for this purpose; against K.C. policy	--Overnight camping restricted by policy
c) Overnight camping in Indian Graves vicinity	1	--None known	--Currently moderate level of other (non-equestrian) recreational users in vicinity. Detailed planning can minimize conflict	--Feasible and desirable for minor equestrian campground development --No other suitable facilities in this area --Standard required should be reviewed

*Based on demand.

**Priority: 1, Very desirable in near future; 2, Desirable in near future; 3, For future consideration.

(continued on next page)

TABLE 1 (Continued)

ASSESSMENT OF SUGGESTED EQUESTRIAN DEVELOPMENTS

Suggested Development*	Demand Priority**	Significant Environmental Factors	Significant Land-Use Factors	Assessment of Development
8. Trap Sullivan Creeks				
a) Continue to provide for horse use in Wileman-Trap-Sullivan valleys	2	--Concern for impacts/ conflicts on ungulates and grizzly in several locales --Sensitive soils/ vegetation at high altitudes	--Existing grazing commitments --Existing trails and routes --Previous coal exploration and some possibility in future of development in accordance with Zone 2 guidelines --Some petroleum exploration and development activity on-going in Trap and Sullivan valleys	--Most existing trails appear suitable for on-going use --Lower use level appears desirable to minimize impacts and conflicts --Access problems preclude developments at this time

*Based on demand.

**Priority: 1, Very desirable in near future; 2, Desirable in near future; 3, For future consideration.

(continued on next page)

TABLE 1 (Continued)

ASSESSMENT OF SUGGESTED EQUESTRIAN DEVELOPMENTS

Suggested Development*	Demand Priority**	Significant Environmental Factors	Significant Land-Use Factors	Assessment of Development
<u>Trailheads</u>				
a) Trap Creek	3	--See above	--Access road from SR 541 requires some upgrading but present landowner unwilling to transfer to province. All other route alternatives would be costly for small-scale facilities proposed --Other non-equestrian camping here has been proposed --Local grazing permittees object to increased public recreational use of leased lands between SR 541 and forest reserve boundary --Trap Creek trailhead could be developed in conjunction with small campground	--Development contingent on approval for a package of recreational facilities/opportunities for Trap and Sullivan creeks --Trailhead and campground at Trap Creek very desirable from trail system standpoint. Good location exists just inside forest reserve boundary --Access restrictions on present road and high cost of alternative makes this development unfeasible at present

*Based on demand.

**Priority: 1, Very desirable in near future; 2, Desirable in near future; 3, For future consideration.

(continued on next page)

TABLE 1 (Continued)

ASSESSMENT OF SUGGESTED EQUESTRIAN DEVELOPMENTS

Suggested Development*	Demand Priority**	Significant Environmental Factors	Significant Land-Use Factors	Assessment of Development
Additional day-ride trails near Elbow/Sheep campgrounds				
a) Sandy McNabb vicinity	2	--Concern for impact on ungulates, especially in Death Valley and Sanctuary --Some areas of poorly drained soils --Sheep River ford can be hazardous in high water	--Access to Sullivan Creek at present across private lands --Important high-quality hunting area --Grazing in area in June and September --Other recreational activities in vicinity --Several existing trails in vicinity that may be suitable	--No grazing by horses permitted --Changes in range utilization due to trail construction can be co-ordinated with grazing permittees --Trail locations will avoid Death Valley and minimize wildlife impacts elsewhere --Summer trail use of less concern than winter use

*Based on demand.

**Priority: 1, Very desirable in near future; 2, Desirable in near future; 3, For future consideration.

(continued on next page)

TABLE 1 (Continued)

ASSESSMENT OF SUGGESTED EQUESTRIAN DEVELOPMENTS

Suggested Development*	Demand Priority**	Significant Environmental Factors	Significant Land-Use Factors	Assessment of Development
b) Indian Oils to Gorge Creek 10 km	2	--Some localized poor drainage --Additional ford of Gorge Creek	--None known, although some grazing in area	--Feasibility contingent on a good alignment and Gorge Creek ford location
c) Ware Creek (Volcano Ridge) 15 km	2	--Concern for fishery impact along Ware Creek --Localized poor drainage --Concern for impact on vegetation and soils, sheep and elk on Volcano Ridge	--Grazing in area --Other recreational activities in area --To be co-ordinated with camping, day-use and road programs	--Small size of development, location of trails and timing of use should avoid or render impacts/conflicts acceptable
d) North Fork 10 km	1	--None known	--Proximity to natural gas facilities, grazing and K.C. boundary	--Day-ride loops feasible to northeast of campground --Very desirable to add trails to this popular campground

*Based on demand.

**Priority: 1, Very desirable in near future; 2, Desirable in near future; 3, For future consideration.

(continued on next page)

TABLE 1 (Continued)
ASSESSMENT OF SUGGESTED EQUESTRIAN DEVELOPMENTS

Suggested Development*	Demand Priority**	Significant Environmental Factors	Significant Land-Use Factors	Assessment of Development
e) Ford Creek 5 km	3	--Localized wildlife areas of concern, especially licks	--Shared use of trails to be considered	--Trail can be routed satisfactorily to avoid licks --Desirable additional loops for this major staging area but priority lower because several already exist
f) Canyon Creek 15 km	2	--Some areas of concern for sheep and elk at higher elevation	--Other recreational uses planned for this vicinity	--Development is feasible and very desirable to provide adequate day-riding opportunities from this approved campground trailhead when it develops --Trails beyond facility zone will be shared with hikers
g) SR 546 or Gorge Creek trail location for primitive roadside group campground/overflow campground	2	--Sheep Sanctuary and Ware Creek fishery concerns	--To be co-ordinated with other K.C. facilities	--Could save as is or be adjacent to overflow campground. Would be used by other than equestrian groups

*Based on demand

**Priority: 1, Very desirable in near future; 2, Desirable in near future; 3, For future consideration.

7. EQUESTRIAN MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

The terms of reference for this master plan directed that appropriate management recommendations be provided. These would focus on equestrian use and provide interim guidance for managers. A comprehensive and in-depth backcountry management plan for Kananaskis Country is required to address the full range of management issues.

For the present, it is assumed that the goal of equestrian management is to ensure adequate resource protection as well as visitor use and enjoyment.

The recommended equestrian management objectives are as follows:

1. To define the appropriate range of equestrian opportunities throughout Kananaskis Country.
2. To clearly define acceptable kinds and levels of impacts and conflicts associated with equestrian use.
3. To carry out the necessary inventory survey or monitoring measures to determine when impacts or conflicts are becoming unacceptable.
4. To utilize a wide range of visitor or site management techniques or actions selectively so as to avoid, reduce or repair unacceptable impacts or conflicts.

7.1 Range of Opportunities

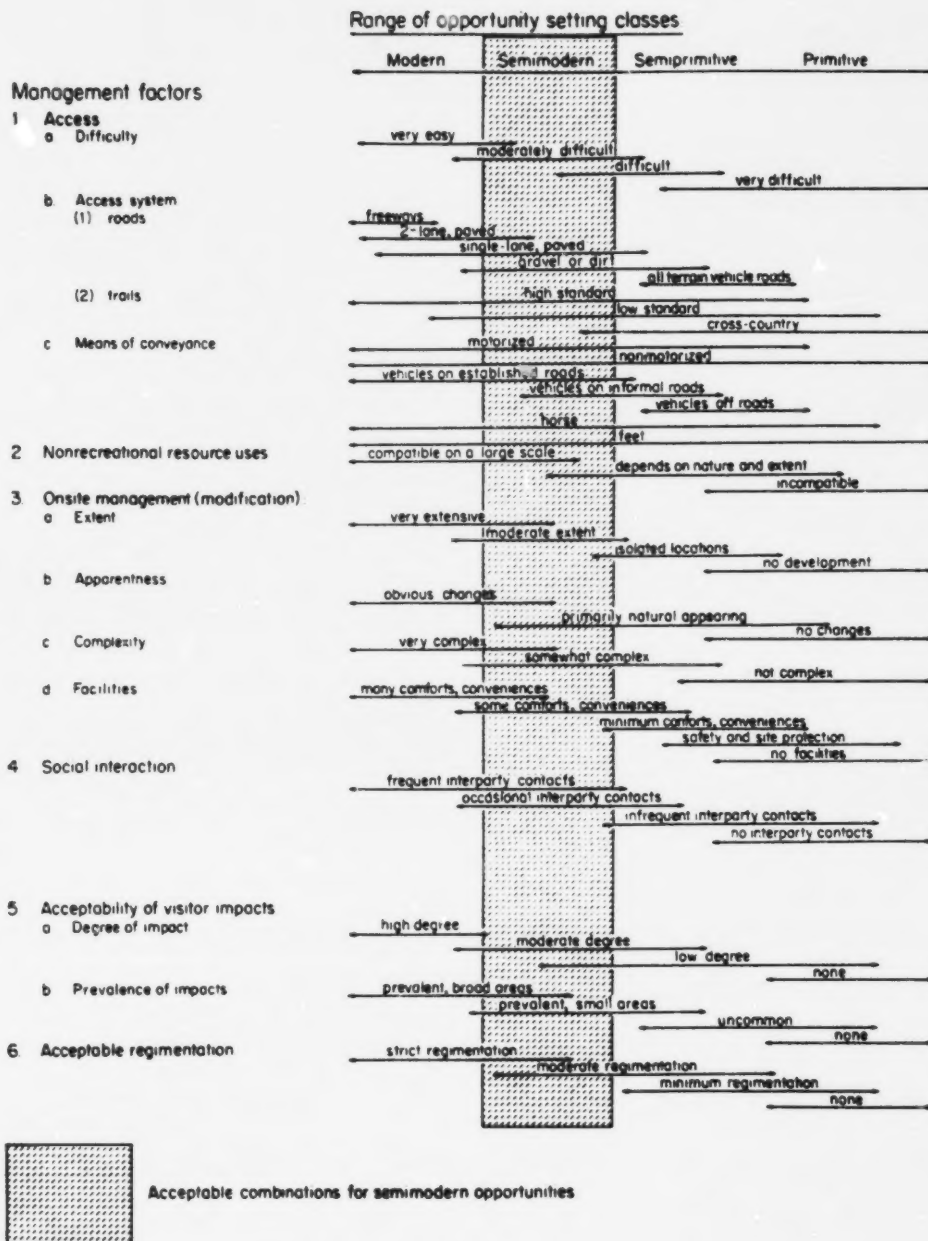
The range of equestrian opportunities appropriate to Kananaskis Country is presented in Table 2. Some equestrian users seek solitude while others prefer social contact in popular campsites. A segment of riders prefers primitive camping in remote areas while another seeks the comfort of a camper or trailer in a roadside campground.

The concept of providing for a range of recreational opportunities is widely accepted in the field of recreation management (cf. The Recreation Opportunity Spectrum: A Framework for Planning Management and Research, USDA Forest Service 1979). The main purpose of this management framework is to help ensure that recreationists (including equestrian users) have a variety of settings in which they can derive a variety of experiences. It should be seen more as a tool than a formula.

The opportunity spectrum has at least four specific applications. These are: (1) allocating and planning recreational resources, (2) inventorying recreational resources, (3) estimating the consequences of management decisions on recreational opportunities, and (4) matching experiences recreationists desire with available opportunities. Numbers (1) and (4) will be most relevant at this stage in equestrian planning while numbers (2) and (3) will soon become more important.

Six factors are important in determining equestrian (and other) opportunities. They are: access, non-recreational resource uses, site management, social interaction, resource impairment and acceptable user regimentation. The following discussion of these factors is adapted

Table 2
RANGE OF RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES



SOURCE: USDA Forest Service 1979:15

from the work cited above and Backcountry Hiking: Use and Management: A Background Paper for the Four Mountain Parks Planning Program (Canada. Parks Canada 1983:19-23).

7.1.1 Access

Most equestrian users will travel on designated trails because of rough terrain, dense forest or unfamiliarity with the area and off-trail travel. Especially in mountainous country, established designated trails can be important tools for directing use patterns and for influencing the kinds of experiences backcountry visitors seek (USDA, Forest Service 1979, p.8).

The ease of backcountry access is an important variable. Ease of access is related to trail difficulty (length, grades) and design standard (lower standards are usually associated with a more primitive experience).

7.1.2 Non-Recreation Resource Uses

Other land-use activities (for example, grazing, petroleum exploration, logging) differ in their compatibility with equestrian opportunities. Generally, equestrian use in the foothills may be more compatible with other land uses than in mountainous areas. Riders near high-standard roads and campgrounds will more likely accept grazing or logging activity or signs of it than riders will in remote areas. Primitive qualities sought by equestrian users are easily lost by access improvements or signs of industrial activity. Nevertheless, reductions

in conflict potential are often possible when careful planning, construction, operation and reclamation are carried out.

7.1.3 Site Management

Facility development or site hardening is the usual form of site management in recreation settings. Trails, designated campsites, huts and shelters and landscaping treatments are examples. More intensive management measures are appropriate where heavier concentrations of use occur and where resources are susceptible to damage. In remote settings, less-intensive site management is appropriate. If remote areas are being damaged by use, other management actions should be considered (for example, trail rerouting, change in fishing regulations).

7.1.4 Social Interaction

Low levels of social interaction are appropriate and expected in more primitive settings. Closer to access roads and major campgrounds or trailheads, higher levels of interaction are appropriate and expected. This factor varies significantly with user expectations and perceptions of the degree of remoteness or primitiveness in a given area.

The types of other users encountered also are important. Roadside settings would generally see less conflict between different types of users except that greater concentration of users also occurs at trailheads or campgrounds. Most backcountry riders would prefer not to

meet any motorized vehicles. It is important to recognize, though, that the interaction is heavily dependent on the perceived compatibility. A courteous trailbiker meeting an equally courteous rider may not feel in conflict. This in turn is affected by primitiveness or other factors.

7.1.5 Resource Impairment

The magnitude and importance of impacts on or due to recreation or other uses must be determined. The magnitude of impact can be determined objectively using accepted scientific methods. The importance of the impact is based more on a value judgment. Importance is considered in light of the desired opportunities and expectations. Generally, a greater magnitude of impact is acceptable closer to roadways or intensive use nodes. There will be cases where this is not so; for example, where important fish or wildlife habitat exists close to a roadway.

Clearly, the magnitude of acceptable impacts must be defined for a given area. Different users will perceive the importance of various impacts in different ways. When the impact at a given site exceeds that level defined as acceptable by managers, the most appropriate management actions are required.

7.1.6 Acceptable User Regimentation

A continuum of controls on equestrian use can be described, ranging from subtle indirect techniques such as site design and

providing visitors with information to more direct authoritarian measures, including enforcement of regulations.

The most primitive opportunities should have few direct controls. More direct controls may be necessary at more heavily used sites or where the diversity of users is greater. However, the principle of minimum regimentation should apply across the spectrum of equestrian opportunities, particularly for trail opportunities. As few regulations as possible should apply beyond the trailhead.

The above six factors are presented on Table 2. This framework is applied to each sub-region of Kananaskis Country (Map 6). Note that each sub-region will have more than one opportunity class. This reflects differing qualities of access, existing use patterns, environmental and scenic qualities and other considerations. Wherever inconsistencies appear between any of the six factors, special attention should be focused on this location or issue. An example is a relatively high-standard (but closed to motor vehicles) access road in a Highwood tributary where generally more primitive conditions are desirable. This inconsistency may lead to a management decision to reclaim the road to trail standards or accept different kinds and higher levels of use. This would be considered in light of other requirements or priorities for that road.

The purpose of arranging equestrian recreation settings in terms of the six factors discussed above is to begin to develop explicitly a range of opportunities to meet public desires better. There are other factors or combinations to be considered and obviously an important element of judgment is involved. It is important to think of opportunities rather than just sites or the activities.

7.1.7 Proposed Recreation management Zones - See Map 6

1. Day-Use Zone

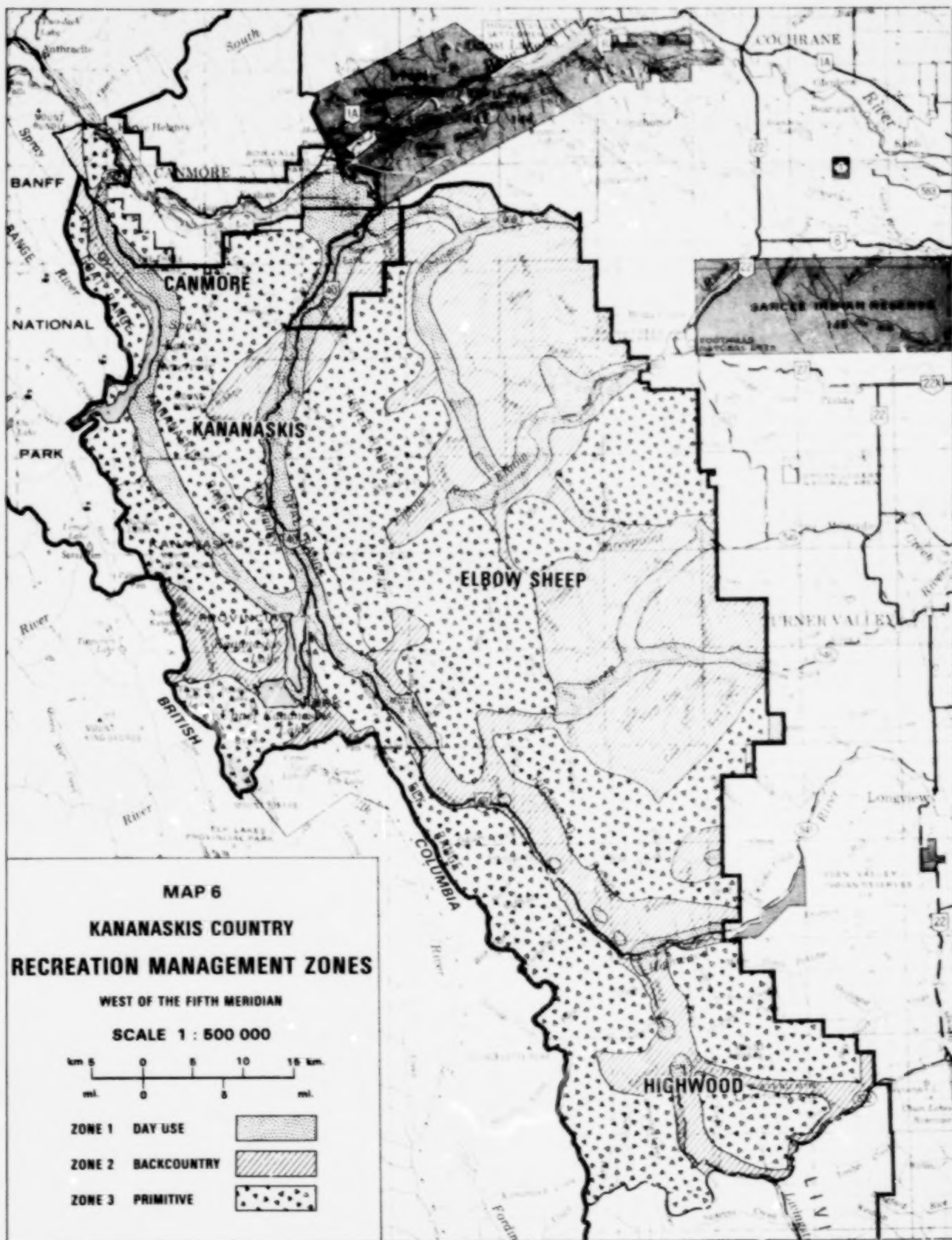
- Moderate- to high-standard road and trail access
- Higher levels of trail use; frequent interparty contact
- Likely to encounter other recreational or resource use or signs of it, especially in highway use
- Greater degree of direct management techniques used
- Frequent use of site hardening techniques (for example trail surfacing).

2. Backcountry Zone

- Low to moderate standard of trail access
- Low to moderate levels of trail use; occasional interparty contact
- May encounter other recreational or resource use or signs of it
- Less use of direct management techniques
- Site hardening utilized only at prime attractions or sensitive areas where impacts would be significant

3. Primitive Zone

- Low to moderate standard of trail access
- Low levels of trail use; rare interparty contact
- Few recreational or other resource uses or signs of them
- More use of indirect management techniques
- Little site hardening used. Instead, rerouting or restricting use levels, types or timing employed.



7.2 Determining Acceptable Impacts/Conflicts

It is assumed that any recreation use causes some ecological change. Research at backcountry campsites in particular has shown that 80 per cent of the trampling damage to soils and vegetation occurs with only light use. As use increases, so does the potential for ecological impact, though not in a linear relationship. While these relationships are reasonably well understood for soils and vegetation, they are less well understood for wildlife and other components.

Increasing use may also have the effect of decreasing backcountry user enjoyment. If trail users enter a backcountry setting expecting relative quiet and solitude and find the area noisy and crowded, disappointments and complaints are almost certain. At what point must managers say "That's enough; we're full; no more can come in"? When does site damage, wildlife harassment, crowding and noise become unacceptable? Generally, impacts and conflicts are less acceptable in more remote areas. If remote areas are to be reclaimed, the standard and means of reclamation may be different than if they are closer to a highway. Furthermore, rather than controlling impacts by applying use limits and regulations, a more selective, less direct approach should first be tried. Specific problems or areas should be identified and treated individually first. It should be recognized, though, that some generalizations or simplifications may be necessary in order to avoid a confusing array of site-specific restrictions.

A review of literature indicates that to define acceptable or unacceptable impacts or conflicts, both the Recreation Opportunity

Spectrum (ROS) concept discussed earlier (section 7.1) and the recreational carrying capacity concept are useful.

It is assumed that providing users with a range of choices in any given region is desirable. An effort is being made to provide a range of equestrian opportunities within Kananaskis Country. Consideration has been given to the opportunities available elsewhere in the region.

There is no absolute measure of acceptability. There are measurable impacts, such as number of trees damaged or area of ground trampled. There are also people's perceptions of the importance of these impacts. People judge the importance of impacts observed by what they expected to find. If the impact is unacceptable, they will be disappointed. Clearly, having a range of choices and good information for people will help them make good choices and avoid disappointment. This seems like common sense but it is also easily forgotten when facing an array of specific problems.

The concept of carrying capacity is well established and in use in several fields of resource management. Grazing and wildlife management make use of it. Recreation researchers in the United States began developing the concept more intensively for recreation management in the early 1960s. Several definitions have been proposed in the literature. One that serves equestrian planning purposes is "the character of use that can be supported over a specific time by an area developed at a certain level without causing excessive damage to either the physical environment or the experience for the visitor" (Lime and Stankey 1971, p. 175). The character of use refers to such qualities as the type,

level of use and the degree of primitiveness. What is meant by "excessive" damage remains to be defined in each area.

The concept has limitations. Its application will reduce uncertainty but not eliminate it. There is no magic number that is the capacity for an area. One of the obvious variables to be considered is how impacts by individual users may be reduced, given their commitment to do so. Similarly, conflicts between different user types may be reduced by increased understanding of the other's motivations and attitudes. It is also worth emphasizing that once firm limits have been set, the manager has the job of monitoring and enforcing them, a relatively time-consuming and costly job in backcountry areas. The establishment of firm numerical limits of users in a given area sometimes leads to demands for a reservation or other system in order to allocate use more fairly.

Obviously, if limits are to be set, they should be based on several criteria. These include clear scientific evidence of unacceptable impacts or potential impacts, obvious physical limitations at the sites, user perception surveys, informed managerial judgment and adequacy of manpower and infrastructure to monitor and enforce limits.

In Kananaskis Country there are several popular backcountry campsites where site conditions and reference to existing norms of acceptable crowding have limited capacity. A few additional sites may have to have similar limits imposed as use levels increase. There appears to be no need to establish carrying capacities or use limits except at these few campsites or in those specific areas with particular wildlife or fisheries concerns. For equestrian management purposes these include the Wind, Pigeon, Evan Thomas and portions of the Highwood

Valley and tributaries. Guidelines on party size, level of use, frequency and timing of use, grazing, use of firearms and fire should be developed first for these areas. Other backcountry and primitive management zones should have similar guidelines prepared but they need them less urgently. Guidelines on party size are included in Recommendations, Chapter 8.

In those parts of Kananaskis Country where no particular management issue or concern exists, there should be few limits on use and a mixture of designated and random camping could be considered.

7.3 Inventory and Monitoring Measures

Effective recreation management requires accurate and appropriate information on the condition of resources, patterns of use and user perception and preference. This usually takes the form of baseline and follow-up monitoring studies of key resources or use-sites, especially trails, campsites and popular day-use sites. Several approaches have been used in other jurisdictions as well as in Kananaskis Country.

Basic use information required includes the location, level, type and timing of use. A variety of ways exists to gather this information. These include trailhead vehicle counts, self-registration, staff field observations and special user surveys. These are also well documented in the literature.

User perceptions and preferences may be obtained by direct communication to field or office staff but this tends to focus attention on the most or especially least liked aspects of the experience. More

representative user comments are required either directly through field staff or on registration or survey cards.

Several inventory, monitoring and survey programs are underway or have been tried in parts of Kananaskis Country (G. More, Kananaskis Country, Canmore verb. comm.). To date they have not been applied to all use sites nor have they been directed particularly to equestrian impacts or use.

Field officers in the Highwood area have observed several sites where trampling damage, litter or grazing impacts are at or near unacceptable levels (T. Naylor, Kananaskis Country, Highwood District, verb. comm.). These have been observed on an opportunistic rather than a systematic monitoring basis.

7.4 Site or Visitor Management Techniques

The range of site and visitor management actions is described in sections 7.1.3 and 7.1.6, respectively. Applying the most appropriate technique in a given situation requires good judgment.

The range of equestrian developments in Kananaskis Country extends from special serviced roadside campgrounds to large areas of backcountry where a ranger or guardian may never pass. Generally, the more intensive equestrian site hardening and visitor management techniques have been applied in the Elbow-Sheep portion. Proximity to user population, high scenic quality, good road access and a relatively long season of use all support this emphasis. Traditional equestrian use of portions of the Highwood and southern end of Kananaskis country suggests that a similar level of development might be appropriate here.

However, the greater distance from the user population, shorter season of use, major wildlife considerations and a desire to maintain opportunities for more primitive backcountry travel support an emphasis on wildland recreation management.

Visitor management techniques included the exchange of information before, during and possibly after the trip. The range of opportunities and the relevant rules are usually the key elements. Limited printed information about equestrian opportunities is currently available. Map brochures for the Elbow-Sheep area plus a few newspaper advertisements and word of mouth have mainly been utilized to date. One booklet "Minimize Your Impact During Horseback Trips" is available from Alberta Recreation and Parks. No specific guide books, few if any articles in the popular riding or hunting magazines/newspapers and few if any courses of instruction are at present available.

Direct contact between knowledgeable, committed management staff and visitors has proven to be the most effective way to achieve reductions in impact and conflicts, and increases in visitor enjoyment.

Much remains to be done by managers in maximizing this quality personal contact and in working co-operatively with groups such as the Alberta Equestrian Federation and the Alberta Outfitters Association. Both groups have expressed a willingness to work more closely with managers.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter is organized into four sections.

The first recommends general equestrian development or management policies that apply overall in Kananaskis Country. These are intended to replace those at present on page 22 of the Policy for Recreation Development of Kananaskis Country (Alberta Recreation and Parks 1977 rev.). They are thus anticipatory in nature.

The second contains specific management recommendations.

Thirdly, the relative benefits and costs of each specific recommended development are assessed on Table 3 and priorities for developments are assigned.

The fourth, a phased approach to these recommended developments/management actions and preliminary cost estimates is then presented. An appendix containing design and construction standards and commercial trail-riding regulations follows the last chapter.

Each development recommendation has been given a number-letter designation in the text which corresponds to the development marked on Map 8.

8.1 Recommended Equestrian Guidelines for Kananaskis Country

A variety of trail-riding opportunities will be developed in Kananaskis Country. These will serve Albertans who own their own horses

and those who wish to engage the services of a trail-riding outfitter. These opportunities will range from shorter and longer day rides to weekend backcountry rides. As well, long trips will be possible on trails that interconnect all parts of Kananaskis Country with a regional trails system in neighboring lands. Development of opportunities to ride over historic routes will occur where the potential is high. Several trails suitable for horse and buggy use will be available. A corresponding range in facility standards is recommended.

The Elbow-Sheep sub-region is one of the best trail-riding areas in Alberta. Horse use is traditional here, scenic quality is high and environmental tolerances are generally greater than in higher elevation areas. As well, current demand is located closest to the Elbow-Sheep and road access is being upgraded, making possible even day trips from the region. Four hundred kilometres of trail will be developed throughout the Elbow-Sheep along with six equestrian campgrounds and numerous trailheads. Overflow camping areas are recommended for development where demand warrants.

Equestrian use in the Canmore sub-region will be limited. A linking trail or route from the Kananaskis Valley through Skogan Pass to the Bow Valley and back into the Spray Valley through Whiteman Gap will be developed when demand warrants. When completed, this will serve those on long-distance trips between Kananaskis and Spray valleys and Banff National Park. A trail for riding, hiking and cross country ski touring has been proposed to connect the Canmore Olympic Nordic Centre with Banff Park trails via the Bow Valley. Trailhead development at Pigeon Mountain vicinity will reflect wildlife concerns in this area as well as private property. A trailhead may be developed near Canmore to

serve both local and regional trail use. Joint trail planning and management will be undertaken if approval for the Echo proposal is forthcoming.

Equestrian opportunities in the Kananaskis-Spray will consist mainly of linking trails or routes, trailheads and backcountry campsites required in a regional trail system. Equestrian developments in the Spray are to be co-ordinated with other public recreation facilities currently being planned. Several day-ride trails will be developed in the Barrier Lake - Bow Valley South vicinity as park development proceeds. These will serve Rafter 6 Guest Ranch and the Yamnuska Centre in addition to the approved Bow Valley South equestrian campground and trailhead. A backcountry group camp for equestrian and non-equestrian use may be developed along the west shore of Barrier Lake. Low levels of horse use will be permitted over Elk Pass into British Columbia.

Equestrian opportunities in the Highwood sub-region will include a range of day rides and overnight trips on existing trails, routes or in trailless areas. Upgrading will be limited to repair or prevention of environmental damage. Backcountry campgrounds will only be developed to protect against or repair unacceptable environmental damage. Increased use of Fording Pass for travel to British Columbia will not be encouraged. Use levels will be generally lower than in the Elbow-Sheep. An equestrian campground will be developed at Etherington Creek to serve the Highwood. Another will be developed at Indian Graves to provide access to excellent riding areas in that vicinity. Impacts and conflicts are minimal at these locations.

Several existing primitive vehicle roads in Kananaskis Country (except within the McLean Creek Off-Highway Vehicle Zone) will be closed

to all but emergency vehicular traffic to remove the conflict potential between vehicles and trail users. All roads no longer required for management or resource-use purposes will be reclaimed to the appropriate standard to improve the recreation trail experience. Any existing trails with impact problems (for example, at stream fords) will see mitigative measures taken.

Horse users will be encouraged to pack in concentrated horse feed and light-weight camping gear to minimize any grazing by recreational stock and reduce the requirement for pack horses.

Most trails or routes developed will be for use both by hikers and riders. Facility planning and design will provide separation where use levels are higher and significant potential for conflict exists. This will most often be in the vicinity of campgrounds or trailheads. Layout of trails and the trailhead must be carefully co-ordinated with vehicle and pedestrian circulation. Trailhead or campground capacity should be based in part on a defined desirable level of use on trails served by that facility.

Opportunities for limited commercial trailriding will be provided initially in the Elbow-Sheep sub-region and near Bow Valley Provincial Park. Permits will be issued with detailed operating conditions to encourage high-quality trailriding experiences and to minimize conflicts and impacts. Operators will have a base of operations outside Kananaskis Country except for existing commercial operations. Any new equestrian development requiring a fixed base of operation inside Kananaskis Country will be limited to facility nodes such as the Ribbon Alpine Village and would be subject to a more

detailed feasibility study to be reviewed by the appropriate Kananaskis Country agencies.

A recreation management plan will be produced for Kananaskis Country in the near future.

8.2 Specific Recreation Management Recommendations

1. Adopt the equestrian management objectives proposed in Chapter 7 of this plan until a more comprehensive management plan is in place.
2. Adopt the recreation management zones as shown on Map 6 as well as the zone descriptors on an interim basis.
3. Establish a review group with representatives from Kananaskis Country, Alberta Forest Service and the Fish and Wildlife Division to conduct more detailed studies of existing or anticipated environmental (especially wildlife) impacts and conflict situations. This is necessary to establish more clearly what the limits of "acceptable" impacts and conflicts are. While the Highwood Valley and Evan Thomas Valley are two areas of particular concern, other parts of Kananaskis Country should be considered.
4. Encourage party size to be less than 10 riders and 15 horses for Kananaskis Country. Larger parties to contact Kananaskis Country offices for consultation.
5. Actively work with key user groups such as the Alberta Equestrian Federation to develop and distribute accurate information about opportunities and rules for equestrian

recreation in Kananaskis Country. Promoting concepts of shared use and minimizing impacts could also be pursued with such groups.

6. Encourage direct, friendly personal contact between individual users in the field and management staff.
7. Develop a comprehensive and co-ordinated backcountry user information package to assist users before and during their visit.
8. Establish a policy of gate-key sign-outs or another solution to allow horse and buggy access to suitable trails. Work toward long-term solution of this operational problem.

8.3 Subregional Equestrian Recommendations

See Table 3. Note that development or designation priorities are assigned generally as follows:

Priority 1 -- Very desirable in near future

- Moderate to high demand
- No suitable temporary facilities available
- Good recreation and development or designation potential
- Minimal environmental impacts and conflict potential

Priority 2 -- Desirable in near future

- Usually moderate demand

- Suitable temporary facilities available
- Moderate recreation and development or designation potential
- Moderate to low environmental impacts and conflict potential

Priority 3 -- For future consideration

- Low demand
- Moderate recreation and development or designation potential
- Low or moderate environmental impacts and conflict potential

Several developments, such as regional trail system links, have little or no existing demand and, in some cases, low to moderate potential, yet are assigned a priority 2 or 3. Where this occurs it is because the development is one component in a desirable larger regional system of trails. The standard of trail or route remains to be assigned and could reflect the relatively low demand.

TABLE 3

SUB-REGIONAL EQUESTRIAN RECOMMENDATIONS

Policies	Justification	Recommended Action	Development/ Designation Priority*	Benefits	Implications
A. Canmore Corridor 1. Develop public equestrian facilities to meet anticipated public demand in Bow Valley South. Management to be co-ordinated with local guest ranch and Yamuska Centre	Demand indicated by market analysis and existing use by Rafter 6 and Yamuska Centre. Potential exists for several short day rides and links to regional trail system	1a) Bow Valley South public equestrian campground	1a) - 3	Meets anticipated demand	New construction funding
		1b) Equestrian trailhead	1b) - 2	Adds diversity and may improve equestrian-use distribution in regional trail system	No serious environmental impacts or problems
		1c) Day-ride trails (2 or 3 totalling 10-15 km)	As 1c) - 2 park development		Conflict between public and commercial riders should be minimal
		1d) Link trails to regional system	1d) - 2 proceeds		Conflict potential between equestrian and other recreationists in this area is significant. Careful trail-system layout is required before development plans for campground and other proposed trails are finalized
2a) Continue to allow equestrian use from the proposed Pigeon Mountain Trailhead	Will meet present low demand for hunting or long-distance trips between Kananaskis, Canmore, Spray and Banff National Park	2a) Designate and develop Pigeon Mtn. trailhead for equestrian use.	2a) - 2		Meets demand from day hikers and equestrian hunters would reduce present enforcement and trespass problems in vicinity.

*Priority: 1, Very desirable in near future; 2, Desirable for near future; 3, For future consideration.

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TABLE 3 (Continued)

SUB-REGIONAL EQUESTRIAN RECOMMENDATIONS

Policies	Justification	Recommended Action	Development/ Designation Priority*	Benefits	Implications
2c) Conduct joint planning, design, layout, construction and management of equestrian facilities with Echo developers if development approval is given	Echo proposal, if approved, would see several thousand visitors in the area. Demand for additional day-ride opportunities would exist	2b) Monitor use and impacts of continuing use in Skogan Pass and on trails from Pigeon Mtn. to Canmore. No development or designation of trail in West Wind Valley or over to Spray			Concern for impacts on elk and sheep in trail vicinity on Skogan Pass. Some conflict potential with hikers accessing Mt. Allan Trail.
2d) Horse use of the Mt. Allan trail will be prohibited	Steep rocky terrain impact on sheep and potential conflict with hikers	2c) Respond to any future private development proposals in this area 2d) Variety of design and user information techniques to be employed by recreation managers	2c) - 1		Public use of private lands would require resolution

*Priority: 1, Very desirable in near future; 2, Desirable for near future; 3, For future consideration.

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TABLE 3 (Continued)

SUB-REGIONAL EQUESTRIAN RECOMMENDATIONS

Policies	Justification	Recommended Action	Development/ Designation Priority*	Benefits	Implications
3. Canmore Vicinity					
a) Co-ordinate equestrian planning requirements of local and regional users	Co-ordination required between many agencies with jurisdiction here and to meet diverse demands	3a) Contact local owners/ administrators and user representatives to assess opportunities for co-ordination Present regional trail system proposal			
b) Develop a public trailhead and overnight facility in Canmore vicinity	Meet demand from local users as well as regional trail users who may require a variety of services in Canmore Contingent on Echo development	Same as above	3b) - 3		
c) Encourage development of a multi-use trail link between Canmore and Banff	Significant potential demand	3c) Develop a multi-use trail from Canmore to Banff in co-ordination with local authorities	3c) - 2	Meets potential high demand	Moderate development cost. Co-ordinated planning required with Banff

*Priority: 1, Very desirable in near future; 2, Desirable for near future; 3, For future consideration.

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TABLE 3 (Continued)

SUB-REGIONAL EQUESTRIAN RECOMMENDATIONS

Policies	Justification	Recommended Action	Development/ Designation Priority*	Benefits	Implications
d) Develop a designated horse trail from Canmore through Whiteman Gap to Goat Creek (Spray Valley) when demand warrants	Only feasible route for such a link	3d) Monitor demand. If warranted, designate old existing pack trail up through Whiteman Gap. Co-ordinate with hiking trail development in this area	3d) - 3	Meets future demand	Low levels of horse use anticipated
B. Kananaskis Spray					
4. Develop basic facilities for long-distance trail trips through the Smith Dorrien and Spray Valley and to access Banff National Park. Facility location design and management is to be co-ordinated with Banff National Park and other provincial recreation facilities in Spray	To meet demand for long-distance trail trips and to provide necessary co-ordination with Banff National Park	4a) Goat Creek trailhead for occasional use by 1 or 2 horse parties	4a) - 3	May be accommodated within K.C. day-use program Would be used by hikers and skiers also	Low added construction cost for limited equestrian function
		4b) Spray West Shore Trail to be designated route and backcountry campsite designated. Contingent on closure of road on west shore	4b) - 3	Additional link in regional system	Would utilize existing roads and trails. Reclamation of some sections or sites is desirable

*Priority: 1, Very desirable in near future; 2, Desirable for near future; 3, For future consideration.

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TABLE 3 (Continued)

SUB-REGIONAL EQUESTRIAN RECOMMENDATIONS

Policies	Justification	Recommended Action	Development/ Designation Priority*	Benefits	Implications
		4c) Develop Upper Spray trailhead for hiking and public occasional equestrian use. This is to be co-ordinated through the Spray Master Plan. Negotiate with Parks Canada and outfitters on their relocation to this vicinity	4c) - 2	Would meet low demand for long-distance trips	Would primarily serve other than public equestrian users. Conflict potential may be high if hiker use levels are maintained or increased
		4d) Develop adequate South Banff access trail as part of long-distance riding trail	4d) - 2	Adequate rider access to Banff National Park	Conflict potential may require separate trails. Poor drainage will raise construction and maintenance costs
		4e) Designate a route linking Upper Spray trailhead to Kananaskis Park core area	4e) - 2	Would meet present low demand Would utilize mainly existing roads and trails	Low construction costs Minimal conflict or impact at low levels of use

*Priority: 1, Very desirable in near future; 2, Desirable for near future; 3, For future consideration.

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TABLE 3 (Continued)

SUB-REGIONAL EQUESTRIAN RECOMMENDATIONS

Policies	Justification	Recommended Action	Development/ Designation Priority*	Benefits	Implications
5. Develop basic facilities for long-distance trail trips through the Kananaskis Park core area to link Elbow Pass to Spray Valley	Trail riding is a traditional use of this area. Several historic travel routes pass through it. A low demand exists for long-distance trail trips from Elbow-Sheep to Kananaskis, Spray and Banff National Park. This is the most feasible of corridors available	4f) Designate Smith Dorrien backcountry campsite	4f) - 2	Necessary in view of distance involved Designation would reduce potential grizzly conflict grazing problems	Concern for minimizing conflicts with grizzlies in prime feeding areas Lower recreational quality in some former logging areas
		5a) Designate a route through the core area	5a) - 2	Would meet present low demand Would utilize mainly existing roads and trails	Traffic and hiker conflict potential can be minimized in layout
		5b) Develop a suitable area as a primitive overnight campsite in the core area	5b) - 2	Would meet need for occasional stopover and restocking, etc. May be used by other than horse parties	Low construction cost

*Priority: 1, Very desirable in near future; 2, Desirable for near future; 3, For future consideration.

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TABLE 3 (Continued)

SUB-REGIONAL EQUESTRIAN RECOMMENDATIONS

Policies	Justification	Recommended Action	Development/ Designation Priority#	Benefits	Implications
5c) Provide for low levels of summer and fall horse use from Elbow Pass trailhead into the Elbow-Sheep headwaters. Separate horses and hikers where feasible.	Demand for access to scenic backcountry area. Popular hiking area means there will be conflict if use levels climb	5c) Continue to monitor; if warranted expand trailhead or designate a portion of the existing Elbow Pass trailhead for horse use. Separate horse trail for at least the first 300 m is desirable	5c) - 1	Meets present and projected demand Reduces conflict with numerous hikers	New construction costs
5d) Provide for low levels of summer and fall use of West Elk Pass	Traditional historic trail route. Low demand unlikely to increase	5d) Designate the Elk Pass trail for horse use by permit only	5d) - 1 Requires designation only	Broadens range of opportunities Makes historic route available Low level of use does not create management difficulties for B.C. land managers	No construction costs Low conflict potential Permit system to be administered by Kananaskis Park
6. Provide for primitive summer and fall use in the Evan Thomas Valley	Traditional use for longer backcountry trips and in hunting season	6a) Develop a separate equestrian/hiking trailhead to serve the Evan Thomas trail	6a) - 1		Moderate construction cost

*Priority: 1, Very desirable in near future; 2, Desirable for near future; 3, For future consideration.

(continued on next page)

TABLE 3 (Continued)

SUB-REGIONAL EQUESTRIAN RECOMMENDATIONS

Policies	Justification	Recommended Action	Development/ Designation Priority*	Benefits	Implications
	Low levels of use to be maintained out of concern for wild life and primitive back-country experiences	Continue to monitor use and impacts			
		6b) Management Plan must address desirable carrying capacity and recommend specific measures to maintain it in Evan Thomas and elsewhere. Work with proponent to determine viability of operation			
7. To consider the establishment of a pony stand facility at the Ribbon Creek Alpine Village	Would broaden range of appropriate recreation opportunities in this facility node. Assuming full development of village proceeds, this would be one of few K.C. locales with potential for viable pony stand	7a) Review village design to determine how pony stand would fit into overall operation and conditions of operation. Review capability of area to sustain pony stand development. Recommend clear operational conditions and limitations	7a) - 1	See justification	Added infrastructure costs to construct required horse holding and other facilities Concern for minimizing conflict with pedestrians and traffic in village vicinity and several hiking trails

*Priority: 1, Very desirable in near future; 2, Desirable for near future; 3, For future consideration.

(continued on next page)

TABLE 3 (Continued)

SUB-REGIONAL EQUESTRIAN RECOMMENDATIONS

Policies	Justification	Recommended Action	Development/ Designation Priority*	Benefits	Implications
7b) Provide for occasional horse use between Ribbon Village and Barrier Dam west shore	Would meet low existing and anticipated demand for link in long-distance trail system. Would also meet part of demand for day rides from Ribbon Village and Bow Valley South	7b) Designate the Trans-Alta Utilities trail	7b) - 2	Would meet demand	Very low construction costs Minimal impact
7c) Provide a 5-unit public trailhead facility in the Ribbon Creek Village vicinity	Would serve riders using the Skogan Pass route or other equestrian trails near here	7c) Develop 5-unit equestrian trailhead for Ribbon Creek	7c) - 2	Would meet existing demand	Low added cost
8. Develop a backcountry group camp facility usable by equestrian and non-equestrian users	Would serve needs of existing Yamnuska Centre program as well as other equestrian groups. May be an attractive facility for school groups	8a) Develop a backcountry group camp on the west shore of Barrier Lake	8a) - 2	Scenic, accessible location for group users	Group camp would be new construction Good vehicle access for maintenance or emergency

*Priority: 1, Very desirable in near future; 2, Desirable for near future; 3, For future consideration.

(continued on next page)

TABLE 3 (Continued)

SUB-REGIONAL EQUESTRIAN RECOMMENDATIONS

Policies	Justification	Recommended Action	Development/Designation Priority*	Benefits	Implications
C. Highwood Sub-Region					
9. Provide for a variety of more primitive summer and fall riding experiences in the Highwood Valley and its tributaries	Historic and traditional area of horse use for summer and fall seasons. Most of area is well suited to primitive trail recreation	Devise a management strategy that will permit traditional patterns of use on trails and routes in the Highwood Designate/develop the following equestrian trailheads in the Highwood. Use existing day-use sites where feasible: 9a) Mist Creek b) Odium-Loomis c) Cat Creek d) Fitzsimmons Creek e) Etherington f) Cataract g) Sentinel h) Indian Graves	9a) - 2 9b) - 2 9c) - 2 9d) - 2 9e) - 2 9f) - 3 9g) - 2 9h) - 2	Will permit parking and unloading in safe off-road locations so that equestrian use of backcountry is feasible - Exists - New construction - Exists - Exists - Exists - Low added cost to approved design - Exists - Low added cost to plans still subject to approval	Few sections of existing trails may need rerouting to reduce environmental impact Logging in Cataract Creek requires close coordination with recreation trail management

*Priority: 1, Very desirable in near future; 2, Desirable for near future; 3, For future consideration.

(continued on next page)

TABLE 3 (Continued)

SUB-REGIONAL EQUESTRIAN RECOMMENDATIONS

Policies	Justification	Recommended Action	Development/ Designation Priority*	Benefits	Implications
		Develop the following backcountry campsites:			
		l) Etherington	9i) - 3	Would help concentrate impacts in harder areas	Development costs moderate
		J) Lost Creek	9j) - 3	Facilitates agency response to questions "Where can I camp?"	
		k) Pekisko Creek	9k) - 3		
		Develop these roadside campgrounds:			
		l) Develop a minor (25 units) roadside equestrian campground at Etherington Creek	9l) - 1	Existing campground infrastructure here	Moderate added cost to existing facility
		m) Develop a minor (25 units) roadside equestrian campground at Indian Graves	9m) - 2	Meets existing and future demand Excellent potential No other existing facilities	New construction costs

*Priority: 1, Very desirable in near future; 2, Desirable for near future; 3, For future consideration.

(continued on next page)

TABLE 3 (Continued)

SUB-REGIONAL EQUESTRIAN RECOMMENDATIONS

Policies	Justification	Recommended Action	Development/Designation Priority*	Benefits	Implications
10. Trap-Sullivan Creek	Some existing use Excellent potential for backcountry recreation	10a) Monitor access, use and impacts to determine need for and feasibility of development or development. Consider public information as ST541		Would serve other than equestrian users	High road costs and owner opposition for low to moderate-use levels
10b) Public access agreement from SR 541 to Flat Creek inside the Forest Reserve Boundary should be pursued.	To develop suitable access to excellent trail opportunities if and when required				
D. Elbow/Sheep Sub-Region					
11. Additional day-ride opportunities in the Elbow-Sheep should be provided, especially near major trailheads and campgrounds	To increase the utility of existing facilities	11a) Develop 10 km of shorter day ride trails near Sandy McNabb campground	11a) - 2	Additional short rides needed at this major campground	All trails proposed have high utility value
	To facilitate good quality day-ride experiences	11b) Develop Indian Oils to Gorge Creek trail 10 km	11b) - 2	Adds attractive loop possibility to Indian Oils trailhead	New construction

*Priority: 1, Very desirable in near future; 2, Desirable for near future; 3, For future consideration.

(continued on next page)

TABLE 3 (Continued)

SUB-REGIONAL EQUESTRIAN RECOMMENDATIONS

Policies	Justification	Recommended Action	Development/ Designation Priority*	Benefits	Implications
		11c) Develop Volcano Ridge Trail 15 km	11c) - 3 Contingent on trailhead and campground development	Access to obvious scenic area from Ware Creek	Volcano Ridge trail contingent on trailhead and/or campground development at Ware Creek
		11d) Develop North Fork trails 10 km	11d) - 1	Day-ride loop badly needed	No serious impacts or conflicts with any of these proposals (see Map 6)
		11e) Develop Ford Creek trail 5 km	11e) - 3	Added day-ride loop	Some new construction
		11f) Develop Canyon Creek trails 15 km	11f) - 3 Contingent on trailhead and campground development	Needed access to Upper Canyon Creek Valley	Trail contingent on trailhead and/or campground development at Canyon Creek
12. Allow horse and buggy use on suitable backcountry trails	Meets demand	12a) Upon inquiry, recommend Little Elbow Trails, Jumpingpound logging roads, and several Highway roads for this use	12a) - 2		No development costs Variable operational cost of gate opening

*Priority: 1, Very desirable in near future; 2, Desirable for near future; 3, For future consideration.

8.4 Development Phasing/Estimated Costs

Phase 1 - High Priority

<u>Priority</u>	<u>Project</u>	<u>Cost</u>	<u>Remarks</u>
1	Develop minor Evan-Thomas trailhead	\$ 35 000	-Present parking hazardous -For summer and fall use only
2	Develop minor equestrian campground and trailhead at Etherington Creek	125 000	-Will be only roadside camping in Highwood -To be co-ordinated with Kananaskis Country (K.C.) South End Master Plan
	Sub-total	<u>\$160 000</u>	
3	Expand Elbow Pass trailhead and develop short separate trail	60 500	-Major, crowded trailhead
4	Designate the West Elk Pass trail and trailhead for horse use by permit only.	Nil	-Permits to be issued by Kananaskis Park.
5	Develop Odlum-Loomis trail-head	27 280	-Central location; no existing facilities, regular demand
6	Develop 10 km trail at North Fork	30 000	-Existing campground with no short-loop rides
	Priority 1 Total	<u>\$117 780</u>	

Phase 2 - Moderate Priority

7	Develop 5 unit equestrian trailhead at Ribbon Creek	32 000	-Co-ordinate with Village Plan -Low use, existing temporary facilities
8	Develop Barrier West Shore Group Camp and designate existing west shore trail	65 000	-Would be used by other than equestrian groups as well
9	Develop Bow Valley South trailhead and link trails	2 000	-To be co-ordinated with Bow Valley South development

<u>Priority</u>	<u>Project</u>	<u>Cost</u>	<u>Remarks</u>
10	Develop Pigeon Mountain trailhead	20 000	
11	Develop equestrian camping and trailhead at Indian Graves	180 000	-Excellent potential, would be only facilities to serve this area. Present random use allows access with no serious problems or issues. Cost of \$25/km for day-ride loops
12	Develop separate trailheads at Mist Creek and Cat Creek	91 770	-Needs to be reviewed following 83/84 use season
13	Adapt existing or proposed trailheads at Etherington Cataract, Fitzsimmons and Sentinel for equestrian use	1 500	-For hitching rails, signage
14	Develop shared-use trail and trailhead between Canmore and Banff	Nil	-To be co-ordinated in Canmore Spray Master Plan
15	Develop shared-use Upper Spray trailhead and adequate South Banff access	27 000	-To be co-ordinated in Canmore Spray Master Plan. -Minimal trailhead cost for equestrian share -If commercial outfitters relocate to this vicinity, separate horse trail would be required.
16	Develop/designate routes and backcountry campsites linking Elbow Pass trailhead to Upper Spray trailhead	23 500	-Would utilize old roads/trails -Up to 3 km new trail required
17	Develop 40 km additional Elbow/Sheep day ride trails	120 000	-Adjacent to Sandy McNabb, Indian Oils, Ware Creek, Canyon Creek
Priority 2 Total		<u>\$562 770</u>	

Phase 3 - Low Priority

<u>Priority</u>	<u>Project</u>	<u>Cost</u>	<u>Remarks</u>
18	Develop Bow Valley South equestrian campground		-Limitations of day-ride potential need to be reviewed -To be co-ordinated with Bow Valley South development
19	Designate Pigeon Mtn. to Canmore link	11 800	-Use of private lands to be resolved -Demand to be reviewed
20	Develop/designate Goat Creek trailhead, Spray West side trail, Canmore trailhead, trail through Whiteman Pass		-To be shared with hikers -To be co-ordinated with Spray Master Plan and other developments
21	Develop 5 km day ride loop at Ford Creek and 15 km at Canyon Creek	20 000	
22	Designate 3 Highwood backcountry campsites	6 000	-When demand warrants.
	Sub-total	<u>\$ 37 800</u>	
	Priority 1, 2, 3 TOTAL	\$878 350	

9. COMMERCIAL EQUESTRIAN SERVICES

A major objective of this master plan is to examine the desirability, feasibility and implications of commercial equestrian services in Kananaskis Country. While no permits for commercial outfitting have been issued in Kananaskis Country, several outfitters have operated here in the past or still do on a lease or informal basis. These provide hourly rides, overnight rides and hunting outfitting services. The variety of former and existing services, the high scenic quality and particularly the current demand data all suggest that the provision for commercial equestrian services should receive serious consideration.

In this section of the plan, several kinds of appropriate commercial services (and their requirements) are identified and assessed, locales for certain services are proposed, and recommendations for policies and management guidelines are presented.

Recommendations refer to Class I, II or III Trail Ride Management Areas. These are described in A Commercial Trail Riding Policy for Alberta in Appendix A (Alberta Department of Energy and Natural Resources, Forest Service, Forest Land Use Branch 1977). An effort has been made to co-ordinate Kananaskis Country recommendations with this policy as well as requirements for hunting guides and outfitters.

9.1 Review and Assessment of Existing Commercial Equestrian Use in the Planning Area

As presented earlier in the demand section of the plan, most commercial equestrian use in the area is of the outfitter or guest ranch type. There are five outfitters, four guest ranches, a small pony stand, a riding club, Banff National Park Outfitter and Yamnuska Centre. No large group rides like those in Banff (for example, Trailriders of the Canadian Rockies) at present occur. Little, if any, hunter outfitting occurs. Information in this section was gathered from the sources above as well as the Alberta Outfitters' Association and other knowledgeable people.

The guest ranches may serve as suitable bases of operation for Kananaskis Country. Some qualified outfitters find Kananaskis Country an attractive area to operate. The good road access, developed trails and trailheads and large areas of good scenery free of vehicular use make Kananaskis Country attractive for trail riding on a weekend or longer basis. Those outfitters based close to the Kananaskis Country boundary may also wish to utilize the trails on a day-ride or overnight basis. These may be in the vicinity of West Bragg Creek, South Bow Valley park and Canmore. The only pony stand operation inside Kananaskis Country that appears potentially viable and fits other proposed developments would be located at the Ribbon Alpine Village. If negotiations to establish an equestrian centre proceed with Improvement District 8 and the town of Canmore, a suitable site may be found on

Kananaskis Country lands adjacent to the town or on Echo development lands.

The Yamnuska Centre offers educational trail riding. The proposals for backcountry group camp and trails along the west shore of Barrier Lake and Kananaskis River and Lusk Pass stem partly from their operation pattern. The operations of the Yamnuska Centre, Rafter 6 Ranch and the public equestrian campground (proposed) at South Bow Valley Park must be co-ordinated. The best means of co-ordination may be a Class III Outfitter Permit in this situation.

9.2 Review of Existing Policies and Guidelines

Commercial trail riding in the Green Area has recently become regulated by an amendment to the Public Lands Act. Trail ride outfitters wanted some means of ensuring product quality and secure tenure on a suitable land area. Both outfitters and the Alberta Forest Service wanted some means to ensure resource protection. The present system envisaged those suitable parts of the Green Area being designated as areas for use by a single operator (Class I permit area) or several operators (Class II permit area). Those areas used on a day-ride basis only were classed separately. The permits would be issued in a competitive bid if more than one application for a Class I area was received. The successful applicants had to provide a plan of operations and several conditions as to the location, timing and manner of operation were to be attached to the permit.

This system has been operating for the last two seasons and is now being revised. In an effort to improve co-ordination between the

trail-ride and hunting outfitter permit systems, the trail-ride permits may become certificates of proficiency similar to the various hunter guide licenses. Authority and conditions of operating on a given land area would be issued in a letter of authority by the forest superintendent. Provisions on the use of fire, firearms, grazing, litter and damage to trees and waters are included elsewhere in the Forests Act and other Acts which the Forest Service administers.

Business licence and relevant building codes (if applicable) and health and safety concerns would fall under the jurisdiction of the local municipal authority, in this case Improvement District 5.

On lands managed under the authority of the Parks Act, the park superintendent is given the power to restrict any horse use to designated trails or areas only. There are additional provisions for entering into concession agreements (for example, with pony stand operators). It was not determined whether existing provisions of the Parks Act were adequate to deal with a similar variety of commercial operations to those managed under the Commercial Trail Riding Policy and regulations. The Parks Act does provide the authority to the superintendent and ranger staff to enforce regulations concerned with minimizing hazards and preserving natural features. Dispositions for grazing may be granted. Prohibitions on the use of firearms in provincial parks or recreation areas also exist.

In Kananaskis Country, a trail-ride outfitter would likely need to utilize a trailhead and a portion of trail managed under the authority of the Parks Act. He would likely ride and camp on lands

managed under the Forests Act and other Acts administered by the Forest Service. It will be up to Kananaskis Country managers to determine whether this warrants issuing two letters of authority or not. It is possible that a concession agreement would be required at Bow Valley South and Ribbon Alpine Village as development proceeds and the viability and feasibility of pony stands is confirmed.

9.3 Review of Demand

As stated in the demand section of this plan, there is, generally, a lack of good quantitative data on which to base demand projections. There is a variety of indicators of varying reliability. There are operations reportedly enjoying moderate or steady growth while others are stagnant or in decline. These changes may be due to changing owner priorities, location, or marketing factors not related directly to demand. Data recently compiled by Travel Alberta indicates that, province-wide, the number of guest-nights has increased by 2.9 per cent to 18 per cent in the last four years, while the number of guests has fluctuated in the same period. Approximately 40 per cent of guests are Albertans.

In general, since it is relatively expensive to own and transport a horse, most people in the region who wish to go on a trail ride will do so on a rented horse. Available data indicates up to 50 000 riders are taken on rented horses annually in the Calgary region. This suggests that providing opportunities for appropriate kinds of trail

riding operations is a priority. While there are services available elsewhere in the region, Kananaskis Country appears to have good potential to accommodate expanded or new outfitting services. At least 12 separate inquiries from interested operators or potential operators were received by the Bow-Crow Forest in the spring of 1982. One new hourly day-ride operation was established in 1982 in the Elbow Valley on land adjacent to the Kananaskis Country boundary. An experienced retailer (Bradley's Western Wear and Saddlery, High River) reported increasingly frequent inquiries from tourists about where they could rent horses or go on a trail ride in the foothills or mountains.

With indications such as these, it is assumed that an undeveloped market situation exists in the region today. In this situation, the planning strategy proposed is to identify those types of equestrian services appropriate to Kananaskis Country; recommend locations for these to be carried out; identify areas off-limits for commercial activities; recommend means of administering control over such activities; and recommend the categories of operating conditions that might be applied. No doubt other kinds of related proposals will be forthcoming but, for the near future, the following assessment and recommendations are proposed to direct commercial equestrian services management in Kananaskis Country

TABLE 4

ASSESSMENT OF COMMERCIAL EQUESTRIAN SERVICES

Type of Service	Facility/Use Requirements	Assessment
Pony Stand	Based outside Kananaskis Country (K.C.) would require shared use of some designated trails inside K.C.	Sharing of trail construction and/or maintenance costs inside K.C. should be considered
	Based inside K.C. would require barn, corrals, client parking and related services, staff housing as well as shared or exclusive use of trails	Trail-use and related impacts plus potential for conflict with other users needs to be assessed carefully
		Infrastructure requirements plus economic considerations and construction and operating costs suggest this service be associated with major visitor centre
		See cost sharing, impact and conflict remarks above
Guest Ranch	Based outside K.C. might require shared use of trails, trailheads, and shared or exclusive use of backcountry campsites	Conflicts with other users and impacts on the environment would have to be minimized by special operating conditions
		Some means of controlling the number of operators in any area would be required

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TABLE 4 (Continued)

ASSESSMENT OF COMMERCIAL EQUESTRIAN SERVICES

Type of Service	Facility/Use Requirements	Assessment
Hunting guide/ outfitter	Based outside K.C., would require exclusive or shared use of trailheads, trails and campsites primarily during hunting season	Current hunting regulations and higher levels of public hunting (and other) uses tend to eliminate non-resident opportunities and reduce demand for outfitters for residents. Thus economic viability of an operation exclusively within K.C. is at present doubtful. Occasional use by smaller guided parties of residents where conflicts are minimal may be feasible Special conditions may be required to minimize conflicts, impacts and damage where appropriate No requirement to provide permanent hunting outfitter base within K.C.
Trail-riding outfitter	Based outside K.C. would require shared use of some trails, trailheads, and shared or exclusive use of backcountry campsites and possible roadside campsite Based inside K.C., would require separate barn, corrals, staff housing, guest staging facilities, as well as shared use of some trails, trailheads, and possible exclusive use of some backcountry campsites	Conflicts and impacts on trails, at most trailheads and backcountry sites could be minimized by special conditions on location, timing and manner of use Some means of controlling the numbers of operators and party size in any area would be required Infrastructure requirements plus economic considerations and operating costs suggest this service be associated with major visitor centre

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TABLE 4 (Continued)

ASSESSMENT OF COMMERCIAL EQUESTRIAN SERVICES

Type of Service	Facility/Use Requirements	Assessment
Special services, e.g., game hauling with pack horses or wagon	Shared use of trailheads and trails/routes	On a day-use basis only. Probably low potential for a conflict and environmental impact. May require letter of authority if repeated trips are made. Other special services would have to be assessed on an individual basis

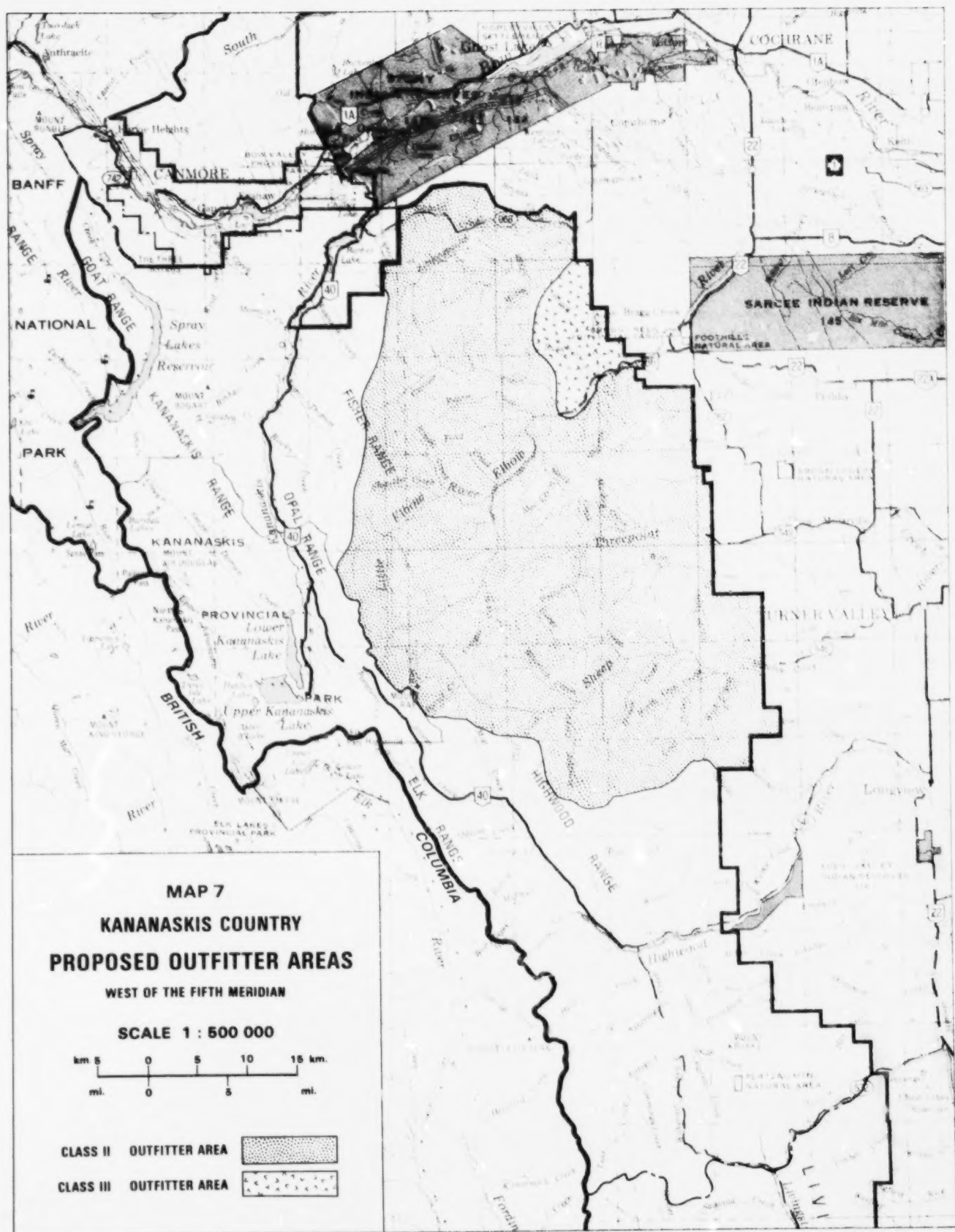
9.4 Recommendations for Commercial Trail Riding
in Kananaskis Country

1. Designate those portions of the Elbow-Sheep sub-region indicated on Map 9 as Class II (multiple operator) Outfitter area. In the first year, Alberta Forest Service will solicit applications for the Sheep portion. Up to three permits may be issued in the first year. Additional permits may be issued in subsequent years for this or other sub-regions if the permit system operates satisfactorily. Permits or letters of authority will specify the location, timing and manner of operations so as to minimize environmental impacts, use conflicts and assist in maintaining a high-quality trailriding experience.
2. Pending Kananaskis Country recreation development plans for West Bragg Creek, consider establishing a Class III (day-ride) Outfitter Permit Area as indicated on Map 7. This would be in response to demands from operators on nearby private lands. Similarly, pending approval for developments in South Bow Valley Park, consider establishing a Class III Permit Area and/or concession agreement here.
3. Park managers will have to determine whether it will be necessary to issue a separate letter of authority to a trailride outfitter operating on park reservation lands. Some amendments to the Parks Act may be required if it proves inadequate to manage various types of commercial equestrian use on Parks lands properly.

4. A public pony stand should be considered for the Ribbon Alpine Village when it can be demonstrated that this would be a viable, long-term business. Care must be taken in the actual location of this stand as much of its success depends on a high-traffic locale. The development and use of trails in this area must provide a good quality experience while minimizing impacts and conflicts. Future developments in the Spray Valley and at Echo may make these possible pony stand locations. Opportunities for overnight pack trips originating from this base are limited at present by areas of wildlife concern.
5. Suggest to Improvement District 8 that a new location for a combined pony stand/community corral be found in the town of Canmore vicinity. Short-loop or linear trails would be developed as well as links to the larger Kananaskis Country trail system (see Map 8). A Class III permit may be required on adjacent Green Area lands if this development occurs.
6. Maintain co-ordinated approach to planning for and managing commercial services within and outside Kananaskis Country (e.g., Banff National Park, adjacent Bow-Crow Forest lands).
7. If trail, route, trailhead and campground development plans/ recommendations for Highwood sub-region are approved, consider establishing Class II permit area(s) here.
8. Authorized hunting outfitters and guides as well as those wishing to provide game hauling services on an on-going commercial basis in Kananaskis Country should be required to obtain a letter of authority from the Alberta Forest Service.

The Forest Service will refer such applications to Alberta Parks and the Fish and Wildlife Division to ensure potential conflicts between commercial hunting parties and commercial trail-riding or other users of that same area are minimized.

9. Formulate a Kananaskis Country policy explicit on shared commercial and non-commercial use of trails, trailheads and campsites.



APPENDIX A

A SUMMARY OF COMMERCIAL TRAIL RIDING POLICY
FOR THE GREEN AREA OF ALBERTA

A Summary of Commercial Trail Riding Policy For the Green Area of Alberta, (Energy and Natural Resources, rev. 1981)

Except for a few relatively small areas requiring special protection for environmental considerations, or where horses would conflict with other recreation uses, the green area will be open to commercial trail riding.

Regulations will require commercial riding operations to be properly authorized. No person shall conduct a commercial trail riding operation without the required authority. This authority will be granted in the form of 5 year leases for base camps and letters of authority for trails, temporary campsites and other facilities.

Suitable areas of lands in the green area will be established as one of three classes of "trail ride management areas".

Single operator trail riding area - (Class 1) - Area capable of supporting a viable commercial trail riding operation. Base camp to be leased to one operator. Other operators may ride into the area but cannot camp without specific approval.

Multiple operator trail riding area - (Class 2) - Area of high attraction into which any operator may ride. Overnight camps permitted but no base camp.

Day use trail riding area - (Class 3) - Area of highest attraction and risk of overuse. Any operator may conduct rides on day use basis, but no camps permitted.

Class I trail ride management areas will be advertised. Operators interested in providing the service and meeting eligibility requirements may submit applications including detailed proposals and

plans of operations. Applications will be reviewed by a committee of representatives from the Departments of Energy and Natural Resources (Forest Land Use Branch), Recreation Parks and wildlife (Wildlife Division) and Business Development and Tourism. The successful applicant will be granted authority to operate according to the approved plan, subject to all applicable regulations and operating conditions.

NOTE: Regulations pursuant to the above Policy also exist as Alberta Regulation 292/79 Number 2.

APPENDIX B

STANDARD EQUESTRIAN FACILITY DESIGNS

Contents:

Campgrounds

- conceptual layout
- standard units
- hitching rail
- manure bin

Trailhead

- standard layout

Trails

- standards sheet
- trail cross sections
- culverts
- non-woven fabric
- drift fence gate

Backcountry Campsite

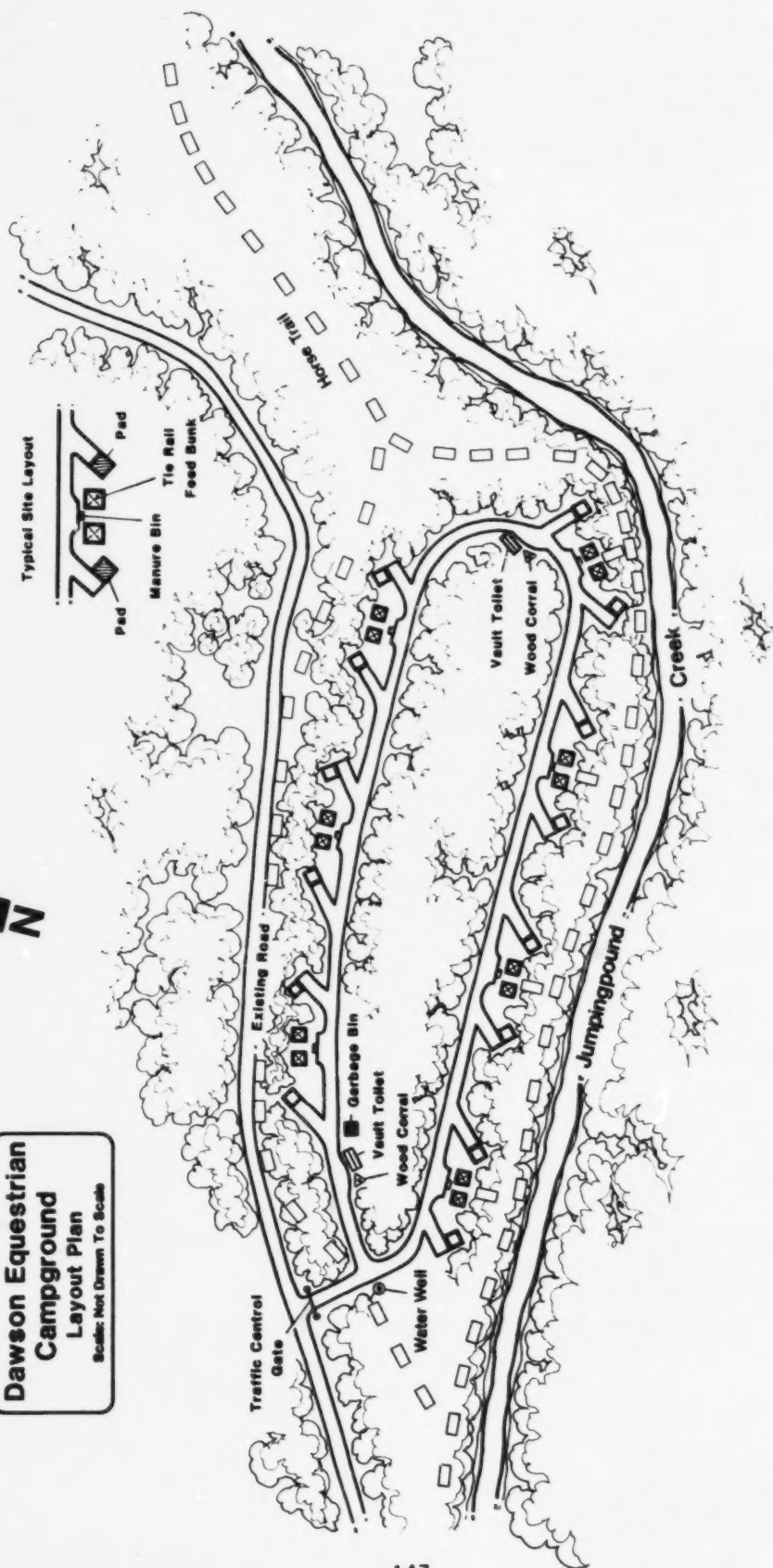
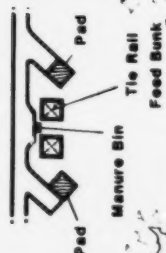
- conceptual layout

Dawson Equestrian Campground Layout Plan

Scale: Not Drawn To Scale

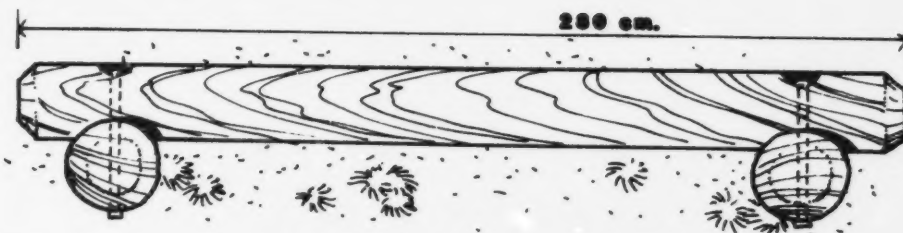
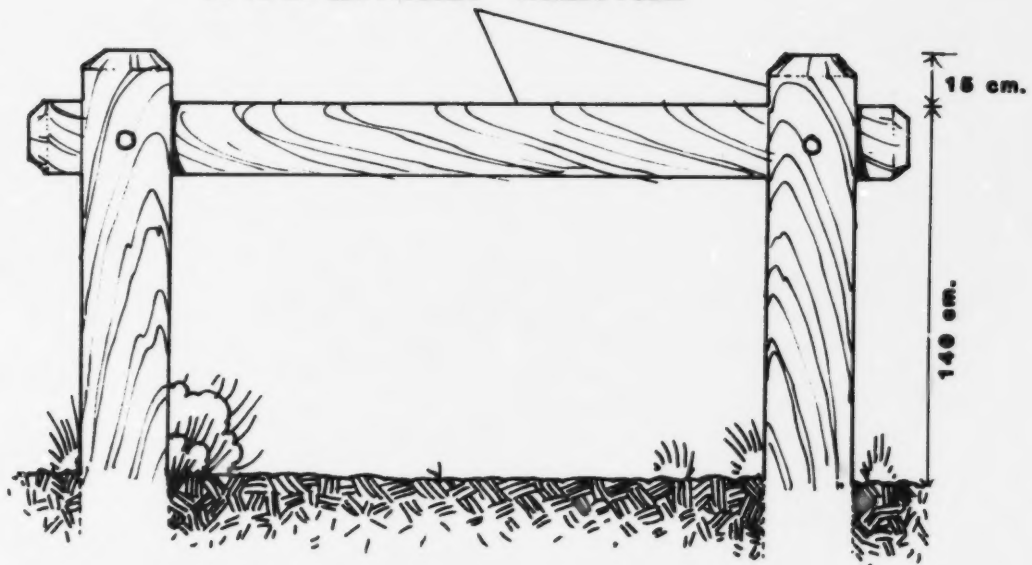


Typical Site Layout

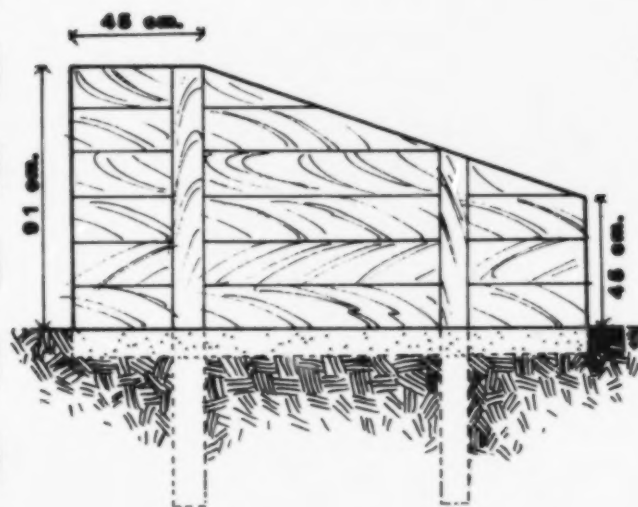


Equestrian Hitching Rail

15 To 20 cm. Pressure - Treated Posts

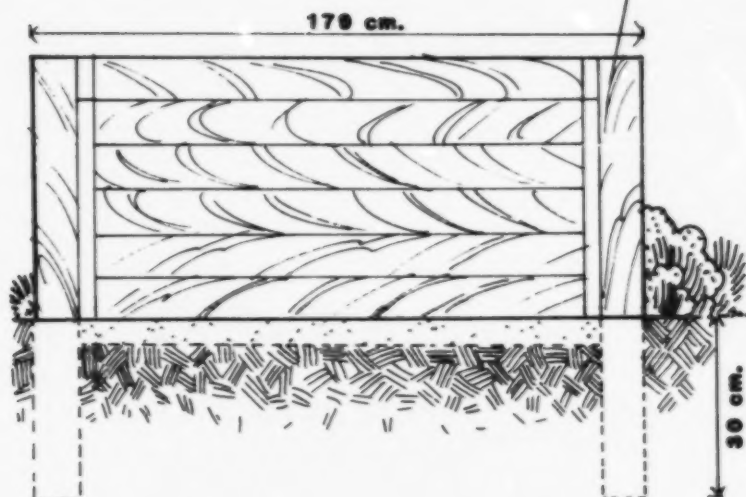


Manure Container

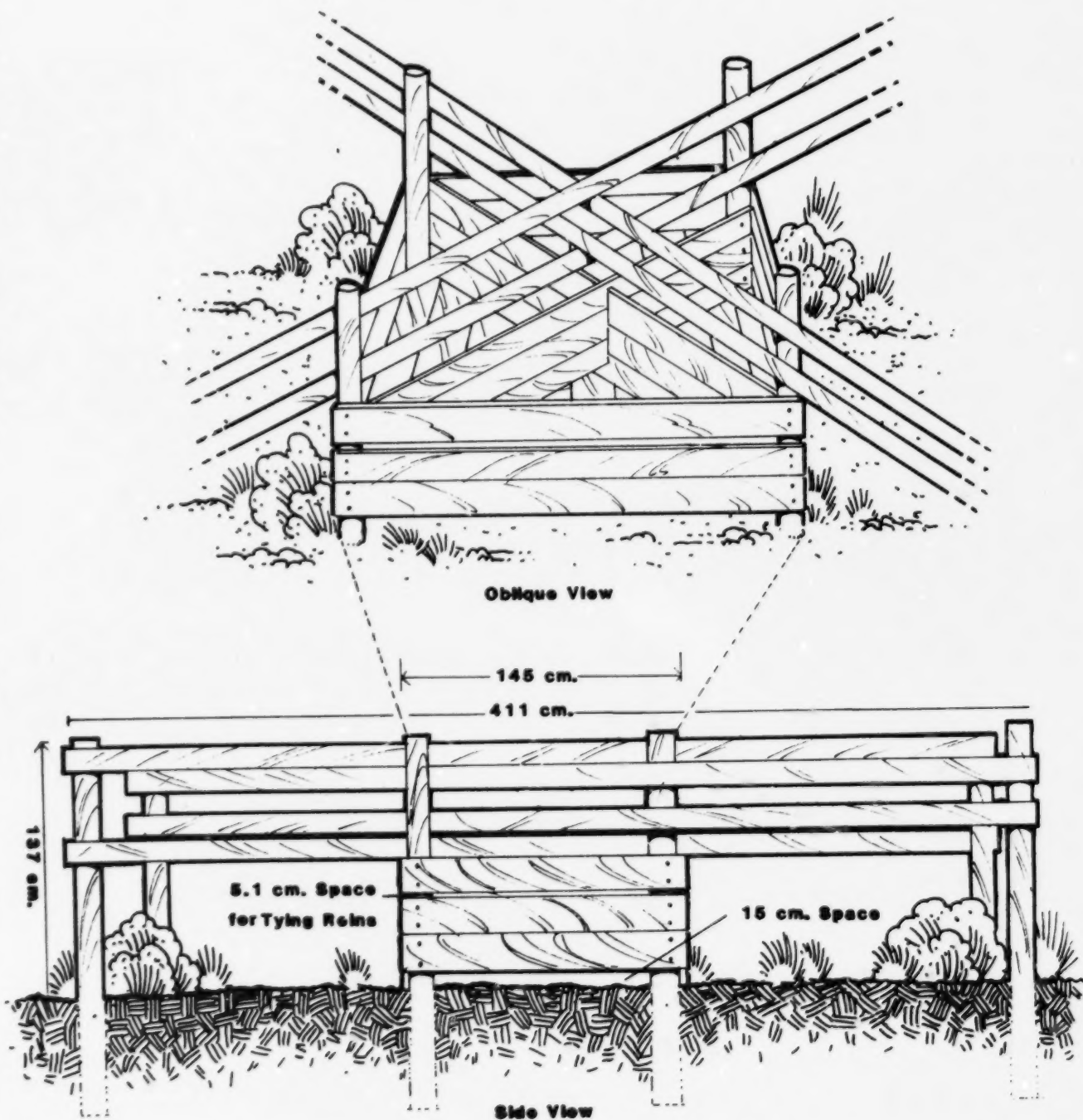


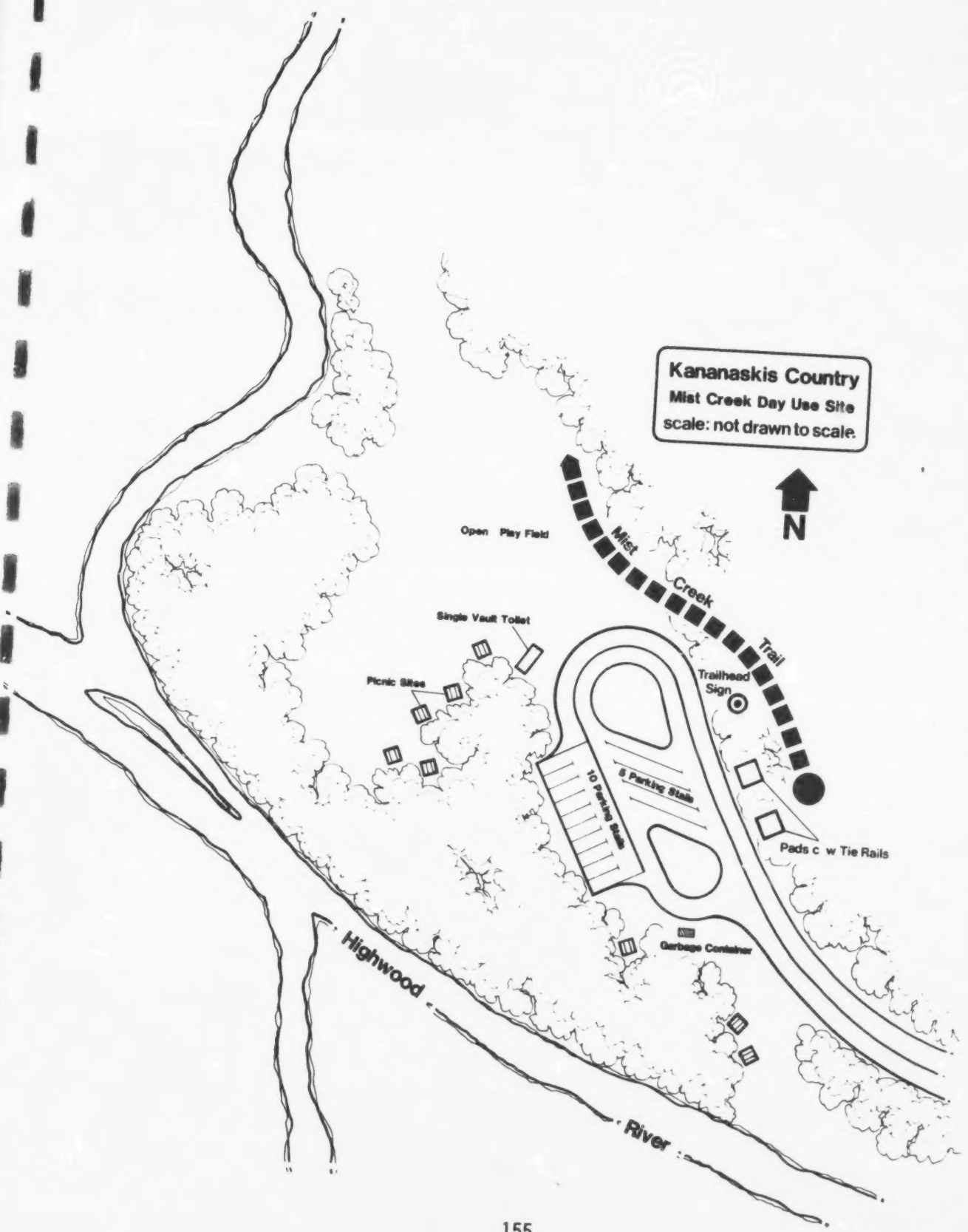
3.6 cm. Board Thickness

8.9 x 14 cm. Treated Posts



Tie Rail Feed Bunk





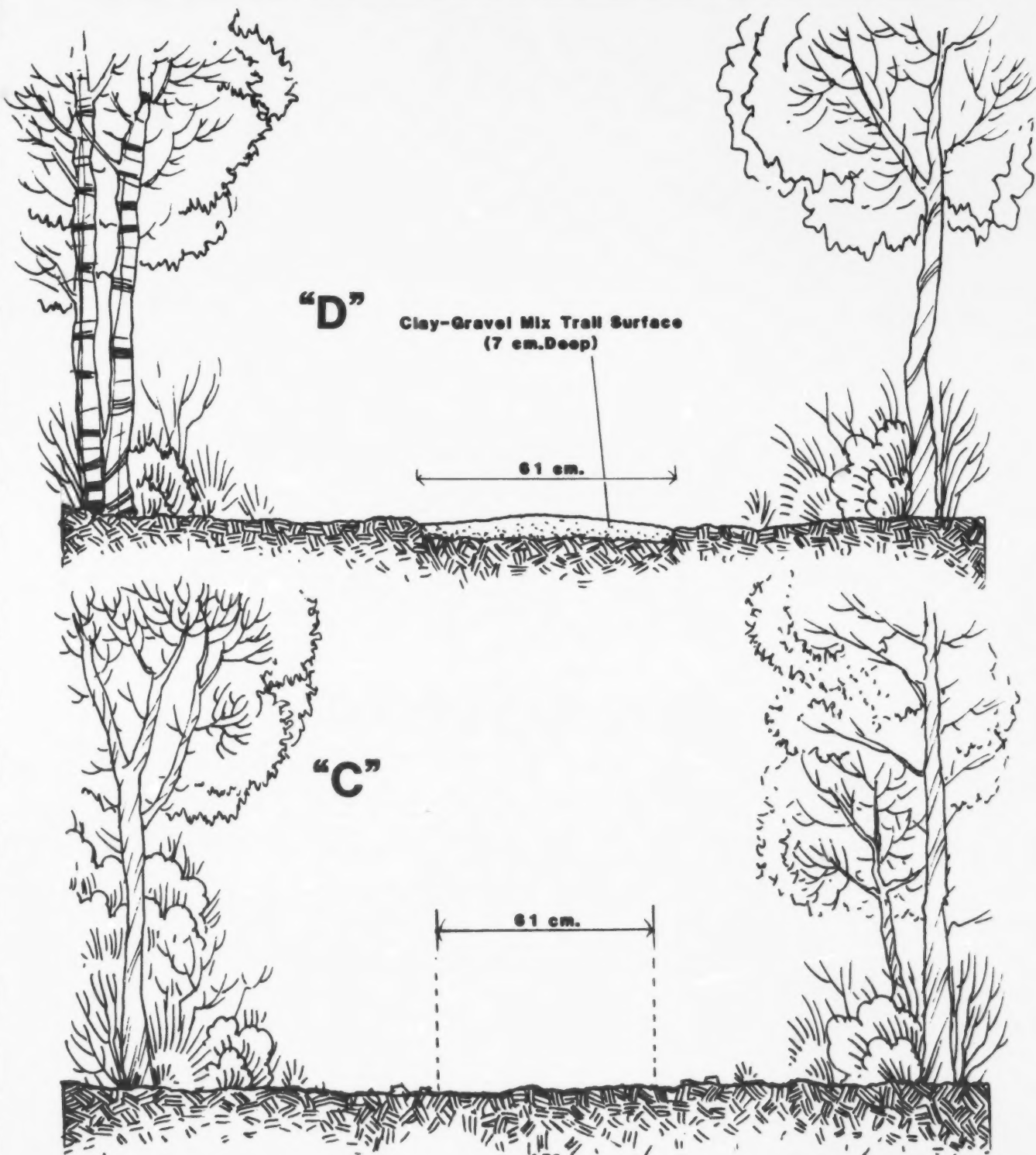
Kananaskis Country
Mist Creek Day Use Site
scale: not drawn to scale.



PROPOSED EQUESTRIAN TRAIL STANDARDS - KANANASKIS COUNTRY
to be added to TABLE 1 KC Design Guidelines Manual

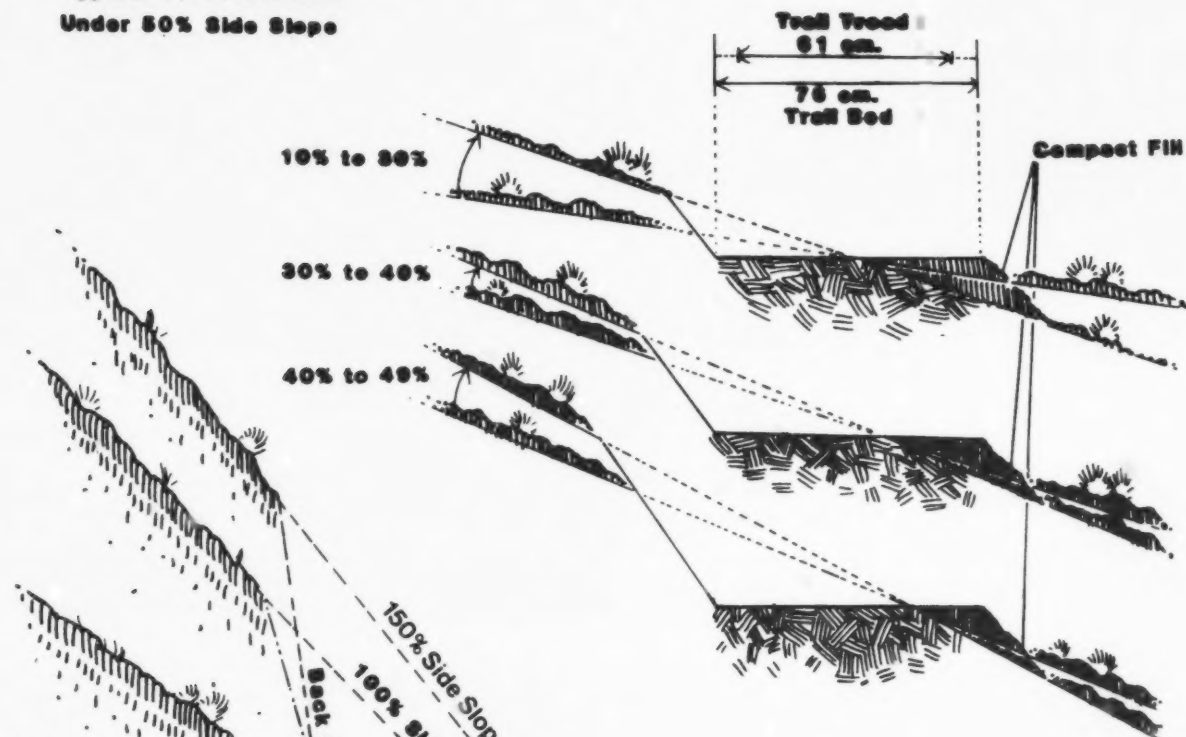
TRAIL TYPE	USE AREA	CLEARING		HGT.	WIDTH		SURFACE MATERIALS	GRADIENT		MAX. SUST.	MAX. SHORT PITCHES
		MIN. - MAX.			MIN. - MAX.			DESIRABLE			
CLASS I	High use trails near campgrounds and major trail-heads.	3 - 4 m.		3.5 m.	2 - 3 m.		local or introduced	0 - 10%		15%	30%
CLASS II	Moderate use trunk trails or Day - use trails.	2 - 3 m.		3.5 m.	.8 - 1 m.		local	0 - 10%		20%	50%
CLASS III	Routes beyond trunk trails.	1 - 2 m.		3.0 m.	.5 - .8 m.		local	0 - 10%		40%	60%

Trail Type "D" / Trail Type "C"

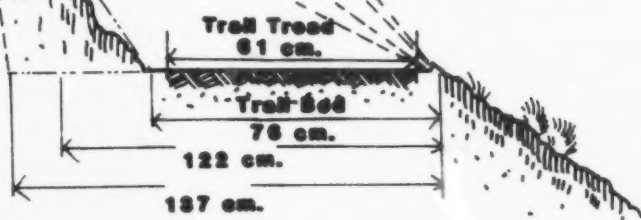


Trailway Excavation

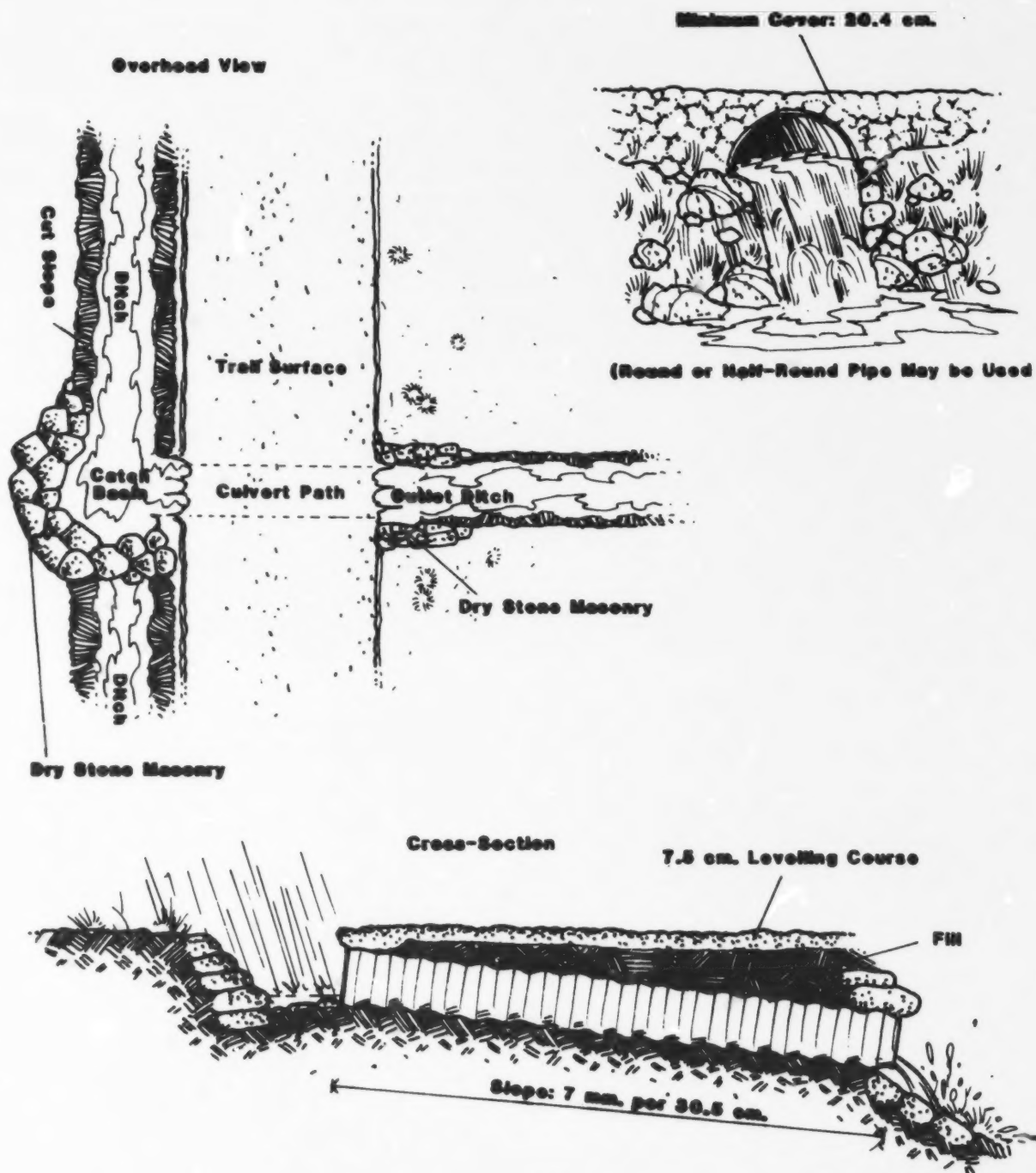
**Typical Cross-sections:
Under 50% Side Slope**



**Typical Cross-section:
50% and Greater**

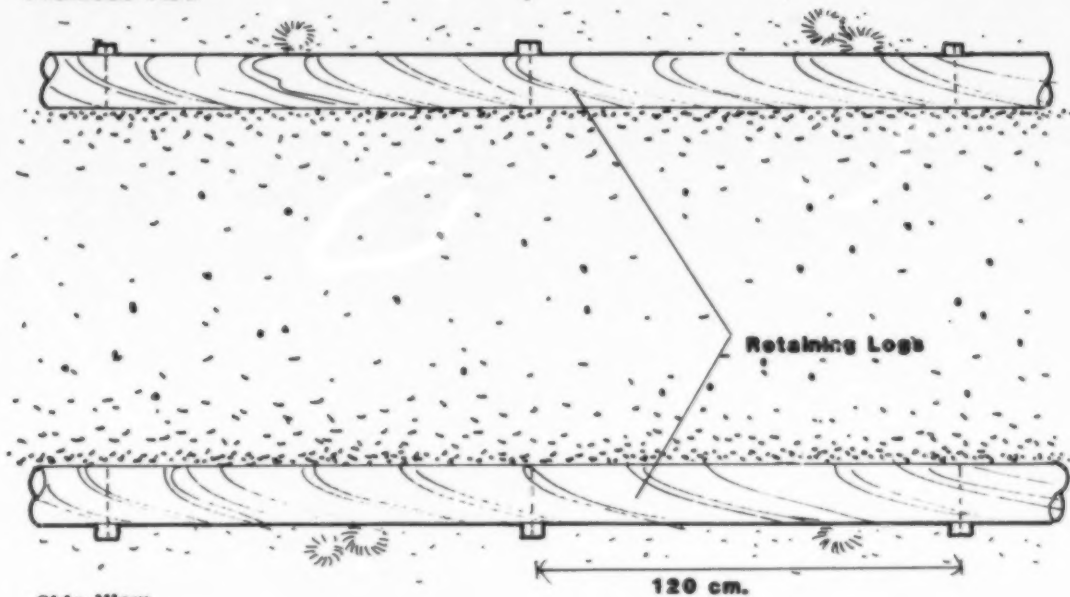


Metal Culverts Installation

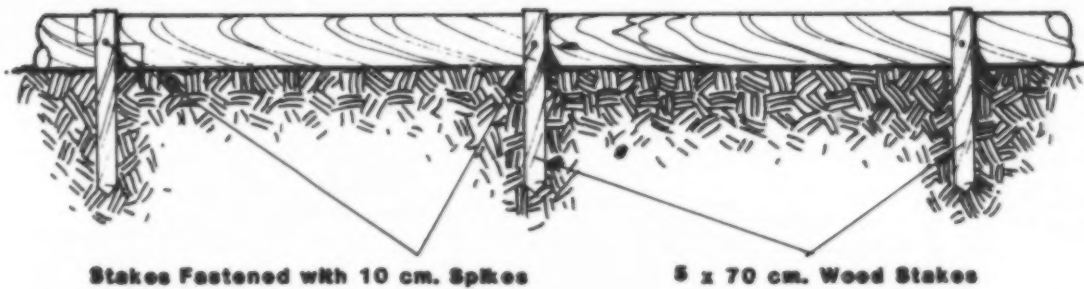


Trail Type "I"

Overhead View

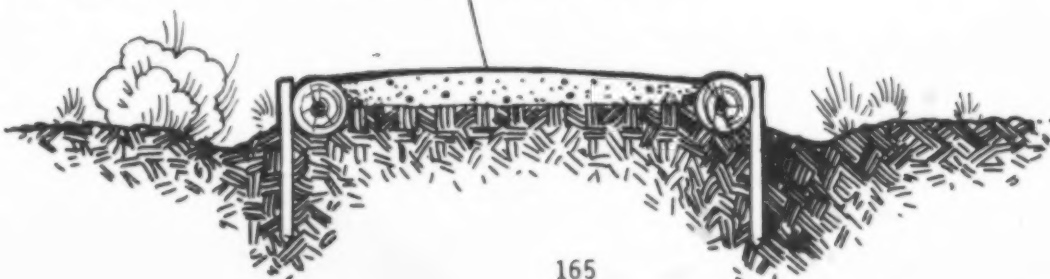


Side View

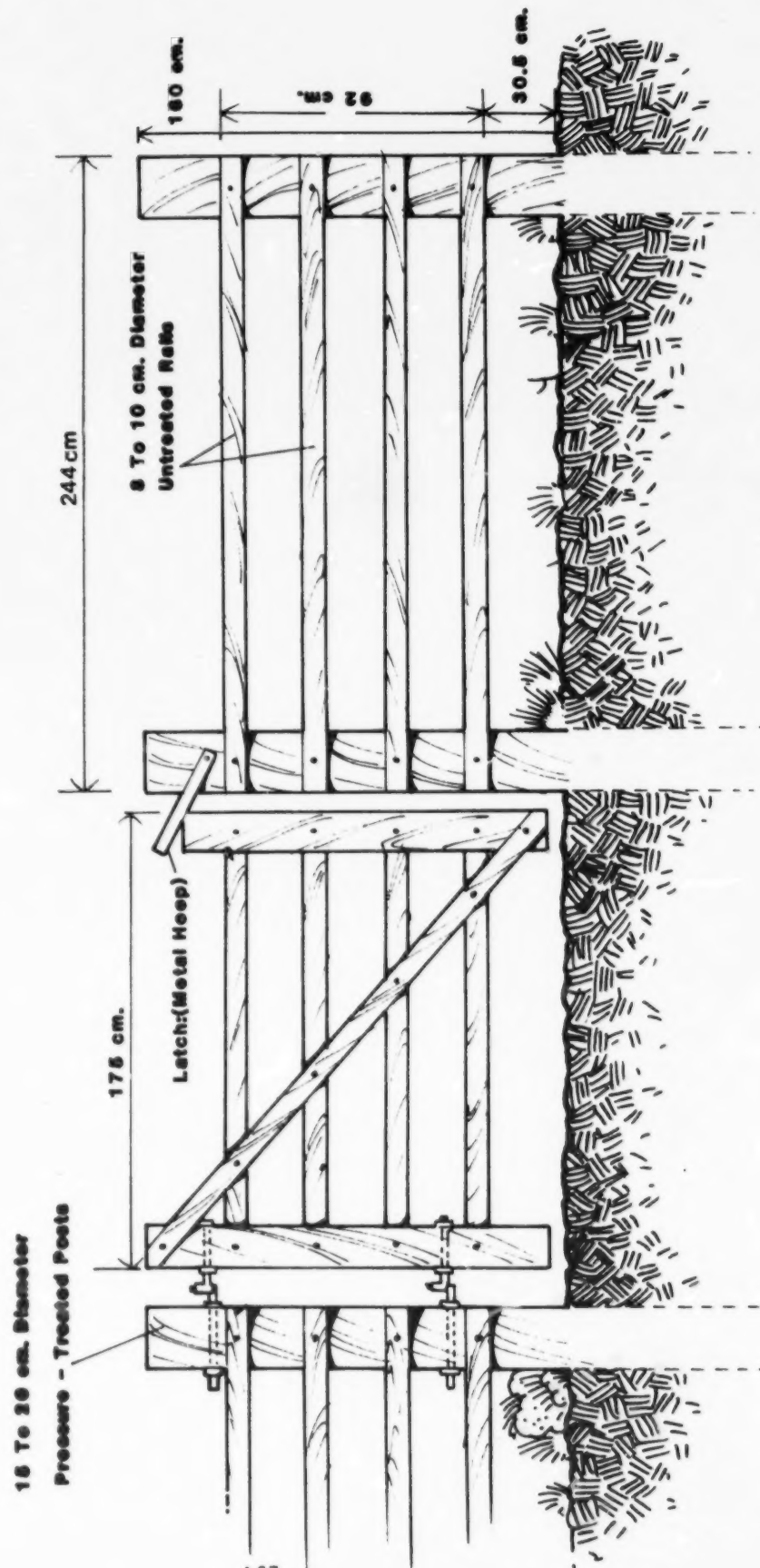


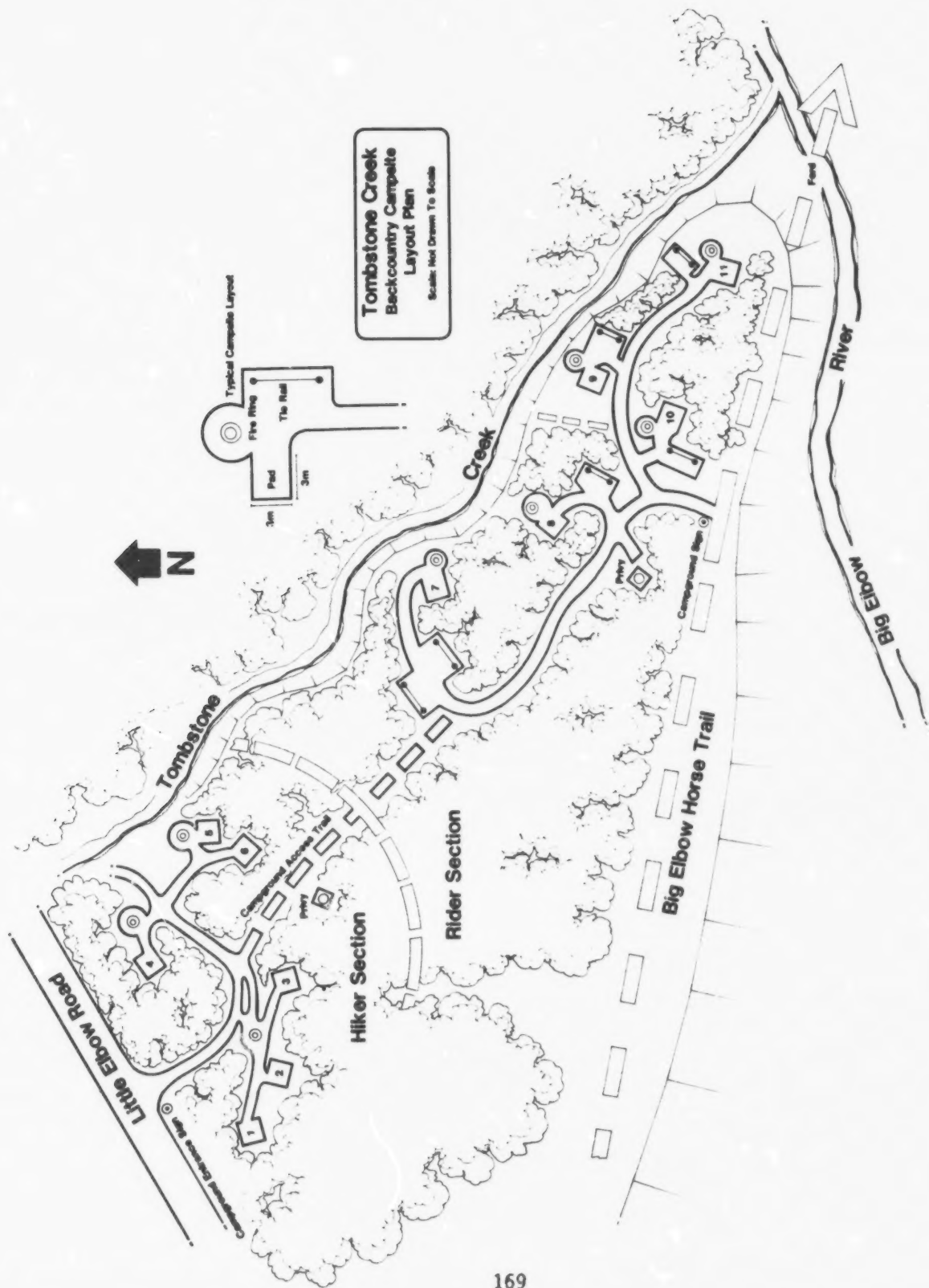
Cross-section

Clay-Gravel Mix Trail Surface



Drift Fence and Gate





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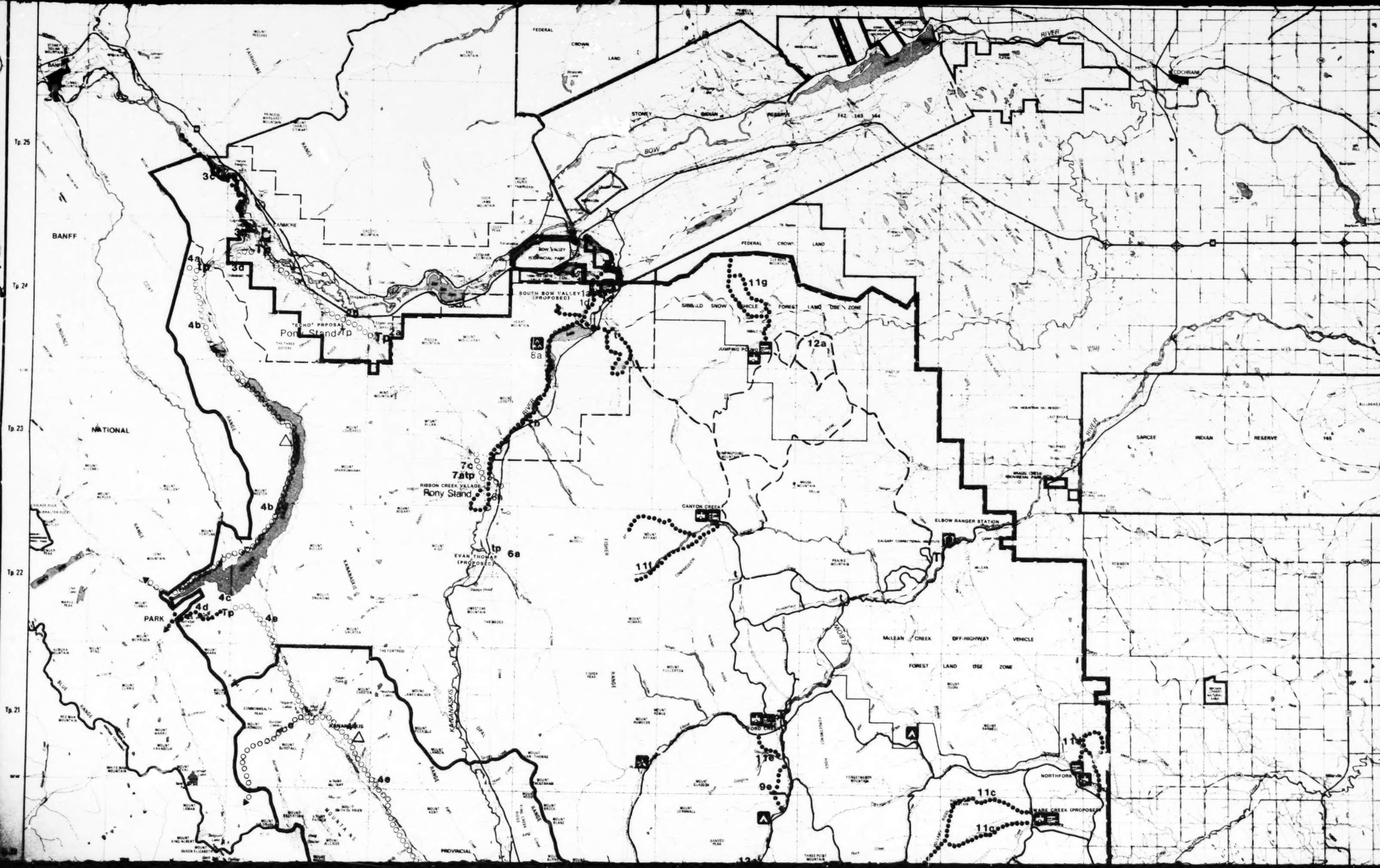
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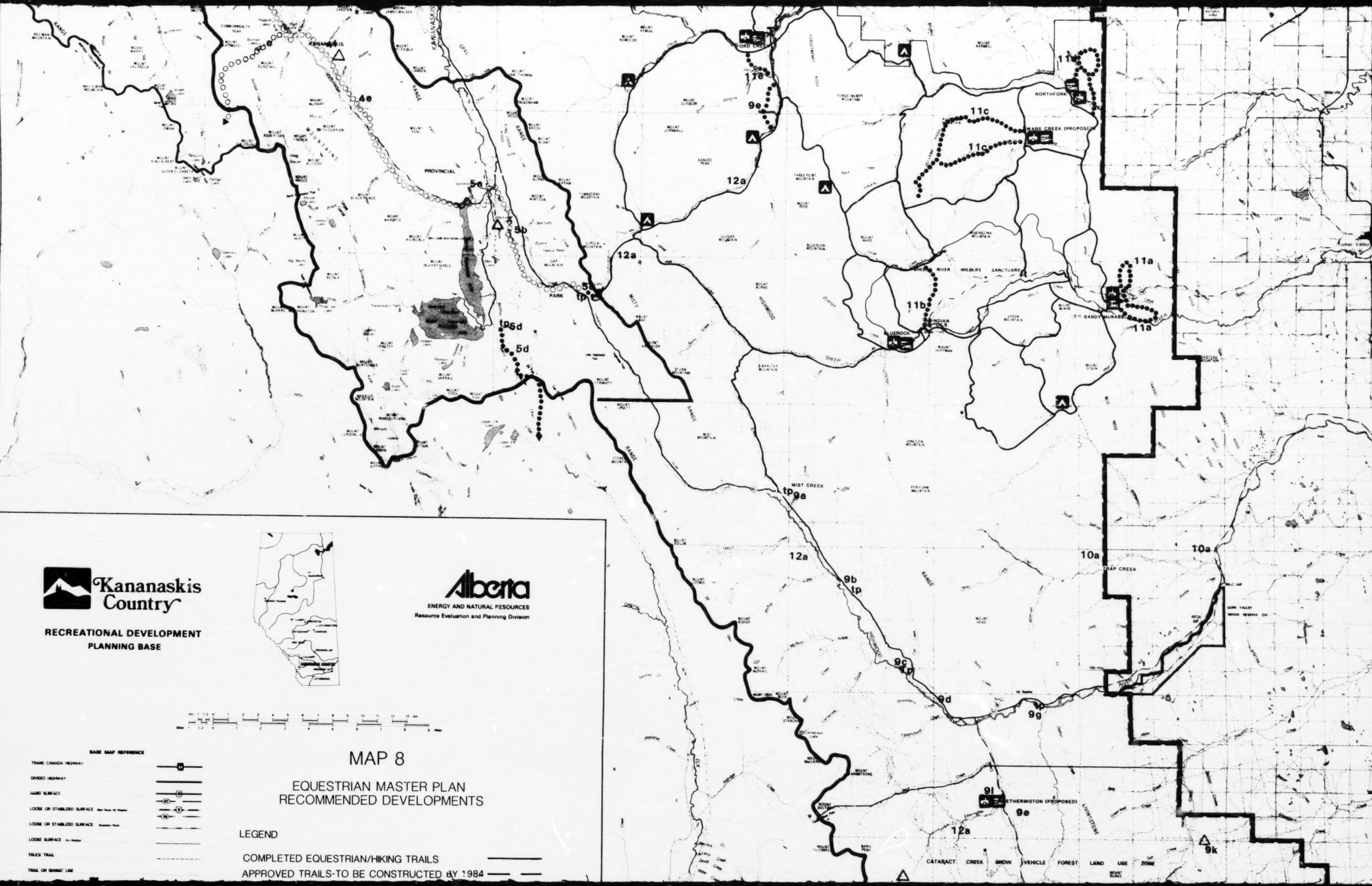
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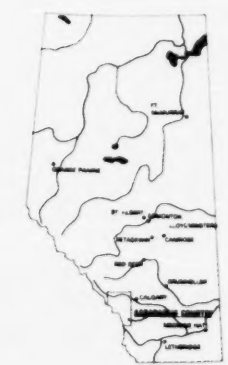


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Tp 20
Tp 19
Tp 18



**Kananaskis
Country**

RECREATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
PLANNING BASE



Alberta
ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES
Resource Evaluation and Planning Division



MAP 8

EQUESTRIAN MASTER PLAN RECOMMENDED DEVELOPMENTS

LEGEND

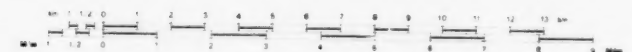
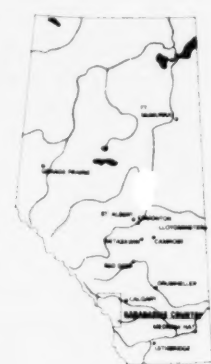
- BASE MAP REFERENCE**
- TRANS CANADA HIGHWAY
 - DIVIDED HIGHWAY
 - HARD SURFACE
 - LOOSE OR STABILIZED SURFACE
 - LOOSE OR STABILIZED SURFACE
 - LOOSE SURFACE
 - TRUCK TRAIL
 - TRAIL ON BOUNDARY LINE

- COMPLETED EQUESTRIAN/HIKING TRAILS
- APPROVED TRAILS-TO BE CONSTRUCTED BY 1984

Tp 18



RECREATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
PLANNING BASE



MAP 8

EQUESTRIAN MASTER PLAN RECOMMENDED DEVELOPMENTS

LEGEND

- COMPLETED EQUESTRIAN/HIKING TRAILS
- APPROVED TRAILS-TO BE CONSTRUCTED BY 1984
- PROPOSED DESIGNATED TRAILS
- PROPOSED DESIGNATED ROUTES
- EQUESTRIAN CAMPGROUND EXISTING/APPROVED
- EQUESTRIAN CAMPGROUND PROPOSED
- MAJOR TRAILHEAD CONSTRUCTED/APPROVED
- MINOR TRAILHEAD CONSTRUCTED/APPROVED
- MAJOR TRAILHEAD PROPOSED
- MINOR TRAILHEAD PROPOSED
- BACKCOUNTRY CAMPSITE EXISTING
- BACKCOUNTRY CAMPSITE PROPOSED
- BACKCOUNTRY GROUP CAMP PROPOSED

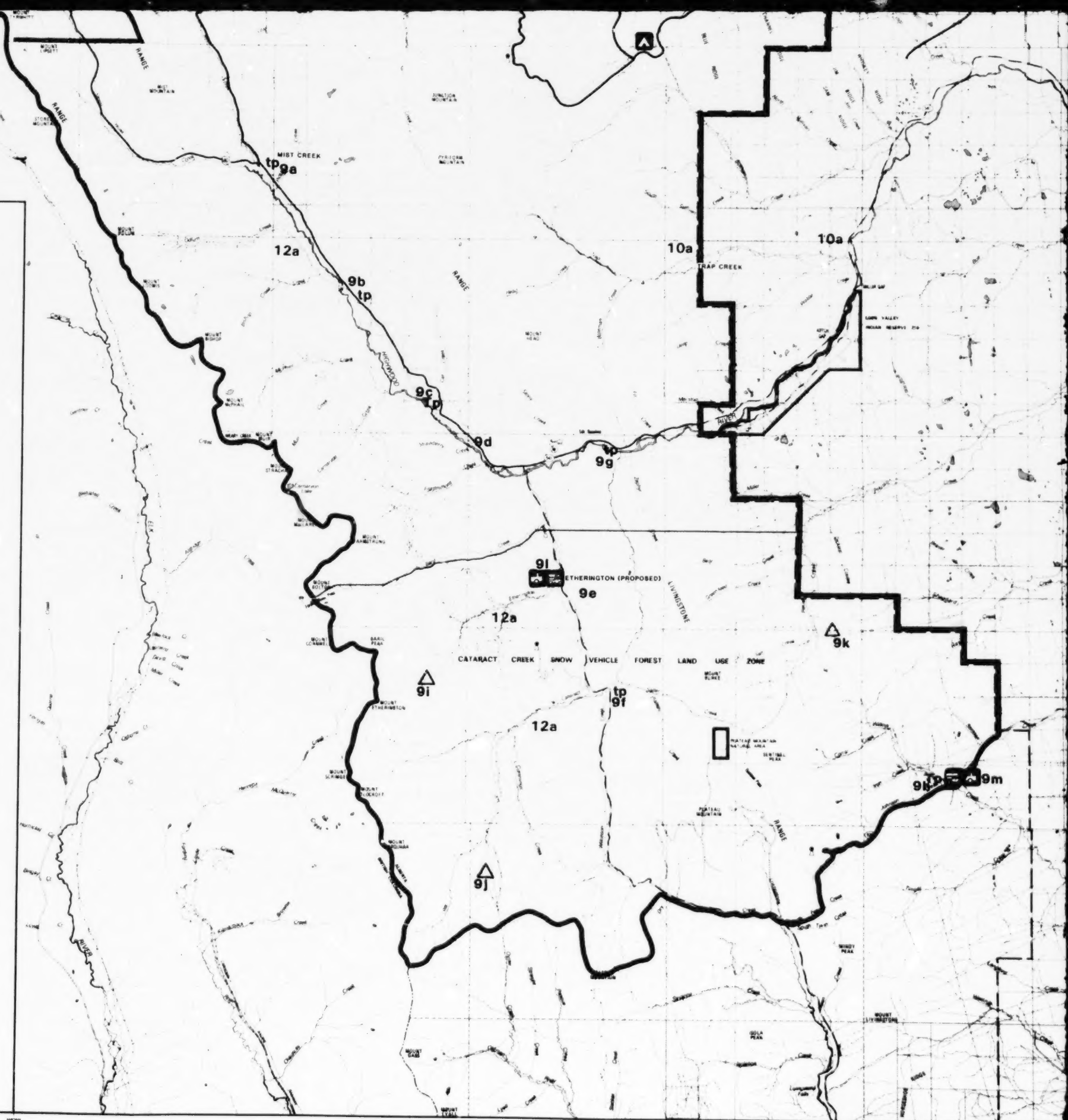
- KANANASKIS COUNTRY RECREATION AREA
- PROVINCIAL PARKS
- FOREST LAND USE ZONES
- SHEEP RIVER WILDLIFE SANCTUARY
- KANANASKIS COUNTRY INTEGRATED MANAGEMENT PLAN

- TRANS CANADA HIGHWAY
- DIVIDED HIGHWAY
- HARD SURFACE
- LOOSE OR STABILIZED SURFACE
- LOOPY OR STABILIZED SURFACE
- LO-4 SURFACE
- TRUCK TRAIL
- TRAIL OR SEISMIC LINE
- TOWN
- VILLAGE
- HAMLET POST OFFICE LOCALITY STATION
- RAILWAY
- GLACIER
- RIVER
- LAKE
- CREEK
- CANAL OR DITCH
- PIPELINE
- POWER TRANSMISSION LINE
- ARETIF
- HELIPAD
- CONTOUR 500 FOOT INTERVALS
- ROCKY MOUNTAIN FOREST RESERVE
- FORESTRY LOOKOUT TOWER
- RANGER STATION
- GLACIER STATION
- PRIVATE LAND WITHIN KANANASKIS COUNTRY

Prepared by the Resource Evaluation and Planning Division for the Kananaskis Division of Public Lands and Wildlife



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R.6

R.5

R.4

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